

1709



HYMN TO SRI DAKSHINAMOORTHY by SRI SANKARACHARYA

Commentary – Swami Chinmayananda

CC-0. In Public Domain. Chhatrasal Singh Collection

B3

HYMN TO SRI DAKSHINAMOORTHY

FEBRUARY 1965

Published by Ram Batra, Hon. Secretary, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust,
Band Box House, Worli, Bombay 18, and Printed by A. J. Deshpande
at Western Printers & Publishers 19/21, Hamam Street, Fort, Bombay - 1.

HYMN TO SRI DAKSHINAMOORTHY

By : Sri Sankaracharya

HYMN TO SRI DAKSHINAMOORTHY

By : Sri Sankaracharya

[*Commentary : SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA*]

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Of all the hymns of Sri Sankara, Sri Dakshinamoorthy Stotra is the shortest but at the same time, in its philosophic import, subtlety of expression and confidence of assertion, it is one of the most inspired works of the Advaita philosopher. On a small canvas Sankara has with unerring dexterity crammed all the arguments of the Nondualists against the preachers of Dualism. Naturally, the stanzas are loaded with suggestion, and to dive into its rich depths special training is necessary for the students.

In short, these stanzas are not lessons addressed to new initiates, but they are discussions with students who have already fully studied the Sastras and are now ready to enter into their meditation seats.

A strict pattern of thought developments is observed in these ten stanzas which are linked

together into one monumental garland of philosophical thought, based on the declarations of the Rishis of the Upanishads.

The opening stanza, while indicating the pluralistic world of perceptions, shows how they are all the play of the One Infinite Reality, and the stanza insists that to realise this Truth, through the help of a proper teacher, is to gain the ultimate goal of human existence.

The following two stanzas describe how the perception of the false has come about — a world of delusive forms and names superimposed upon the Infinite Everpresent Reality. Stanzas 3 and 4 explain the methods by which this misapprehension of the Reality can be ended, and also describes how the Light of the Infinite expresses Itself from within each one of us through the vehicles of our perception.

Stanza 5 indicates how this delusory power of Maya confuses some great students of the Upanishads, and even greater thinkers and philosophers.

Stanza 6 focuses our attention upon our own experiences in life. It indicates methods by which, through a scientific analysis of our own vivid experiences in the three planes-of-consciousness — waking, dream and deep-sleep — we can easily come to realise that the Reality behind our individual personality is the Reality behind the entire universe.

Stanza 7 points out what is the fathomless Substratum upon which alone is reflected the play of change that dances to the tune of finitude and sorrow.

Stanza 8 answers the material scientists and the secular observers of the world who consider the world as real because it is constantly yielding to them a series of definite sets of experiences.

In stanza 9 the usual technique of Upasana is prescribed for those diligent students, who even after a deep and careful study of the previous stanzas, are not able to fully appreciate the import of them all. Lack of integration within will make students unfit for such subtle flights to the lofty heights of Vedanta, when it discusses the Ultimate Theme. To help them gain the necessary integration this stanza prescribes an Upasana.

The concluding stanza states that these are not ideas to be merely heard or understood, but that each student should reflect upon them and make them his own. It also explains how, as a result of this education, each one of us can achieve an unfoldment of our own personalities to a diviner dimension and to the eventual attainment of "Liberation".

These stanzas have unsuspected depths though superficially, they have a simple and direct meaning. Every phrase that is used in them has a definite purpose and it is lined up against an army of opponents who believe and argue against the conclu-

sions of the Vedantic Philosophy. Thus the Sankhyans, the Vaiseshikas, the Naiyayikas, the Charvakas, the Buddhists — not to mention the different minor groups — all come under the annihilating intellectual fire of Acharya Sankara in these discussions.

Here we meet not only Sankara, the devotee, but we discover Sankara the disputant and Sankara, the champion of the Advaita Philosophy, armed to the teeth, fighting against all misconceptions, illogical arguments and hasty conclusions — alien to the spirit and letter of the Upanishadic declarations.

The contents being so sublime, it is not easy to understand for the new initiates, who might read these articles prompted by mere idle curiosity. To those who have already studied* a couple of the Upanishads and, at least, a few chapters of the Geeta, this series of talks through print will be of immense use. Such serious students alone are addressed by me here in these discussions. If any one, not yet familiar with the Upanishadic contents, finds this book difficult, he is invited to go through the earlier books prescribed by us in our "Scheme of Study". These ten stanzas are a summary of the arguments in the *Upanishads*, of the declarations in the *Brahmasutras* and of the *Geeta*.

* According to the SCHEME OF STUDY as prescribed for our Chinmaya Mission Study-Groups and seriously taken up in their Study Classes.

The Upanishadic declaration, "Brahman alone is the Reality; the world-of-change is a delusion"* is the theme that is taken up here in these ten stanzas by Acharya Sankara, and he elucidates its subtle imports with a philosophical scholarship, tempered by kindness, towards those who cannot directly understand the deeper suggestions of the Upanishadic thought.

As it stands today, we have a commentary (*Vartikam*) upon these ten stanzas by Sankara's great disciple Sri Sureswaracharya. This is entitled as "*Manasollasa*". To help the students in both the original and the *Vartikam*, we have again a book of lucid notes given by Sri Swayamprakasa Yati.**

The Guru Upasana, indicated here, runs as a unifying idea through all the ten stanzas. It is meant not for those seeking material benefits but only for those who are desirous of achieving the Wisdom of the Self (*Atmalabha*).

The Upanishads repeatedly declare that the Supreme by Its own inherent power (*Maya*) created the world by Its own will (*Sweccha Sakti*). This "Power" expresses itself in an individual both as knowledge (*Vidya*) and ignorance (*Avidya*). In its

* Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya Jeevo Brhamaiva Na-aparah.

“ब्रह्मसत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवा ब्रह्मैव नापर.”

** He calls his note by a modest title:
 "Laghu-Tattwa-Sudha-Nidhi-Vyakhya"

expression of *avidya*, Maya has two essential powers, the "Power of Veiling" (*Avarana-sakti*). The former veils the essential Nature of the Reality and the latter superimposes upon it an illusory state of a limited and changing existence.

As an example, the misapprehension of "a serpent in a rope", can continue only so long as we have not apprehended the rope. The non-apprehension of a post in the dusk alone can cause the misapprehension of it as a ghost. The *non-apprehension* is created by the "Veiling Power of ignorance" and the *mis-apprehensions* are the products of the "Projection Power of ignorance".

When the agitations created by the projections are slowly controlled, to that extent the veil is lifted, and both being ignorance, annihilation of them is the end of *Avidya*. Where *Avidya* has ended, *Vidya* manifests itself and that mind, in which the *Vidya*-power is fully generated, becomes the vehicle with which the Supreme is apprehended in a subjective intimate experience.

These are the fundamentals that are emphatically and repeatedly propounded by innumerable Rishis in the various Upanishads. Upanishadic literature spreads out through many centuries during the course of which, different teachers at different periods sought to discover and declare the nature of Reality from different stand points. All of them have reached the same conclusion. We may say that the majority of them accept this ex-

planation of the how, the why and the wherefrom of the world-of-plurality perceived by the ego, apparently so real and yet, so completely superimposed upon the Infinite Substratum, the Truth.

These ten stanzas, composed in one of the most difficult metrical forms* available in Sanskrit serve as a very convenient fleet of vehicles in which Sankara loads all the implications of the *Upanishads*, suggestions of the *Brahmasutras* and the ideas of the *Geeta*. He not only expounds the philosophy of Advaita, but we find that he has also exhaustively answered all the other schools of thought, proving by suggestive and subtle indications the hollowness of their logic.

To an observing student it is clearly evident that the first three lines of each stanza indicate the goal to be realised (*Gyayam*) while the last line extols the path of devotion without which mental integration is not easily possible. A disintegrated mind cannot wing its way through contemplation and ultimately glide into the subtle plane of the Infinite Consciousness.

Lord Shiva, in order to instruct the Rishis and the Seers assumed the form of a Guru, and sitting on the peak of Kailas He turned southward to serve all seekers. In the Upanishad** we read

* Saardoola-vikreeditam — शार्दूलविक्रीडितं

** शेमुषी दक्षिणा प्रोक्ता सा यस्यामीक्षणे मुक्कम् ।

दक्षिणामिमुखः प्रोक्तः शिवोऽसौ ब्रह्मवादिभिः ॥

Semushee Dakshina Proktaha Saa Yasyam Ikshanae Mukham,
Dakshinabhi-mukha-Prokta Sivo-asow Brahmavadibhi.

(Dakshinamoorthy Upanishad).

the explanation of the term Dakshinamoorthy. The term "Dakshina" means "that divine power of subtle perception generated in a fully integrated pure intellect". This *Dakshina*-Power when flowing towards (*Jkshanae Mukham*) the Vasana-conditioned hearts of the disciples (*yasyam*) is called "turned-southward", and this is Siva, say Champions-of-Reality (*Brahma-vadibhih*). So, the Teacher is none other than the Supreme who has manifested Himself to bless the struggling aspirant, in the Divine Form of Sri Dakshinamoorthy. He is invoked here for our devoted worship.

In almost all the rich vernaculars of India there are many translations and commentaries available upon these ten stanzas. While in Sanskrit itself, even in the year of its composition its vast erudition and import was fully recognized as is evident from the exhaustive commentary (*Vartikam*) of Shri Sureshwaracharya entitled "*Manasollasa*".

Shri Sureshwaracharya, one of the most eminent and glorious of the Acharya's disciples, was at one time the disciple of Sri Kumarila Bhatta, the famous exponent and revivalist of Vedic ritualism, (*Karma Kandam*). We read in "*Sankara Dik-Vijayam*" how Sankara sought Kumarila Bhatta to challenge his philosophy. When he reached Bhatta, the great champion of Karma was on his deathbed, but at his request Sankara sought a

discussion with Bhatta's famous disciple Mandana* Misra at Magadha. With all his erudition and scholarship Mandana Misra was no match for the Acharya. After several days of debate he was defeated, and was accepted by the Acharya as his own disciple. Initiating him into the order of *Sanyas*, Shankara renamed him as Sureshwaracharya. In my discussions I shall be closely following both the *Manasollasa*, and the available notes on the *Vartikam* by Yati Swayamprakasha.

Vedanta philosophy has, as it were, two distinct aspects. A theoretical side, where the appeal is to the head, wherein arguments are marshalled in order to remove all misconceptions and to bring to the seekers an intellectual understanding of the existence of a greater Reality. The other aspect of Vedanta is the re-discovery of the goal indicated through these discussions which is the actual apprehension of this great Reality. It can be gained only on transcending the mind-and-intellect equipment. A synthesis is what should be aimed at by all Sadhaks.

A sincere student's intellect gets re-educated and quietened by the logic and reasoning available in the *Sastras*. A synthesis of the heart and intellect, where the former is brought into the search by the "path" of love, devotion and consecration

* He had a title as "Viswaroopa Acharya"—The Cosmic Teacher.

(Bhakti Marg). A lop-sided development of the intellect over the heart will achieve neither beauty nor harmony. Thus, the students of Vedanta should have both a clear intellectual understanding (*Gyanam*) of the great goal and also an infinite devotion (*Bhakti*) to Truth in the form of their teacher.*

In an English translation it is extremely difficult to do full justice to the mysticism, the beauty and subtlety embodied in this Hymn. English, neither in its diction nor in its construction can stand the strain and load of Sankara's style. But by attempting to grasp the suggestions and implications hinted at in the poetic imagery which Sankara has here employed, you will be able to follow better the mode of translation adopted by me. Please read again the translation after you have studied the commentary — you will find the difference !!

* Hence it is said in the Svetashwatara Upanishad (6-23)

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।

तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥

Yasva deve para bhakthih yatha deve tatha gurow

Tasyaite kathitha hyarthah prakasanthe mahathmanah

He who has supreme devotion to the Lord, and the same devotion for his own Guru, to him alone the meaning of these words (Sastras) become clear.

ध्यानं

MEDITATION VERSES

मौनव्याख्याप्रकटितपरब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं
वर्षिष्ठान्ते वसद्विषिगणैरावृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः
आचार्येन्द्रं करकलितचिन्मुद्रमानन्दरूपं
स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥ १ ॥

*Mowna-Vyakhya-Prakatita-Para-Brahma-
Tatawam Yuvanam
Varsistantaevasad-Rishiganai-Ravrtam
Brahma-Nishtaihi
Acharyae-ndram Karakalita-Chin-Mudra-
Mananda-Roopam
Swatma-Ramam Mudita-vadanam Dakshina-
Moorthi-Meedae*

(1) I worship Sri Dakshinamoorthy, the young Guru, who teaches the Knowledge of Brahman through silence, who is surrounded by disciples, who are themselves Rishis and scholars in the Vedas, (I worship Sri Dakshinamoorthy), who is the Teacher of teachers, whose hand is held in the "Sign of Knowledge" (*Chit-Mudra*), whose nature is Bliss, who ever revels in the Self, and who is ever silent.

वटविटपि समीपे भूमिभागे निषण्णं
सकलमुनिजनानां ज्ञानदातारमारात् ।
त्रिभुवनगुरुमीशं दक्षिणामूर्तिदेवं
जननमरणदुःखच्छेददक्षं नमामि ॥ २ ॥

*Vata-vitapi-sameepae Bhoomi-Bhagae Nishannam
Sakala-Muni-Jananam Gyana-Datara-Marat
Tribhuvana-Guru-Meesam Dakshina-Moorti-
Devam*

Janana-Marana-Dukh-Chedadaksham Namami

(2) I bow down to Sri Dakshinamoorthy, the teacher of the three worlds, the Lord, the destroyer of the miseries of births and deaths, who, seated on the ground under the banyan tree, grants knowledge to all the Rishis who have assembled near Him.

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु च्छिन्नेसंशयाः ॥ ३ ॥

*Chitram Vatatarormoolae Vridhah Sishyah
Gurur-Yuva*

*Gurosthu Mownam Vyakhyanam, Sishyasthu
Chinna-Samsayah*

(3) Strange indeed! Under the tree were the aged disciples around the youthful Guru!! He taught them with "silence" and the doubts of the disciples were all dispelled.

निधये सर्वविद्यानां भिषजे भवरोगिणाम् ।

गुरवे सर्वलोकानां दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥ ४ ॥

*Nidhayae Sarvavidyanam Bhishajae Bhavaroginam
Guravae Sarvalokanam Dakshina-Moortayae
Namah*

(4) Salutations to Sri Dakhinamoorthy, the Abode of all learning, the healer of all those who suffer from the disease of *Samsara*, and the teacher of the whole world.

ॐ नमः प्रणवार्थाय शुद्धज्ञानैकमूर्तये ।

निर्मलाय प्रशान्ताय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥ ५ ॥

*Om Namah Pranavarthaya Suddha-Gyanaika
Moortayae Nirmalaya Prasantaya Dakshina-
Moortayae Namah*

(5) Salutations to Sri Dakhinamoorthy, who is ever pure and ever calm, the embodiment of Pure Knowledge, and who is but the indicative meaning of OM, the Supreme.

A teacher is expected to convey a greater knowledge to the taught, and therefore, he must estimate correctly the intellectual and mental condition of the taught. Also he must judge the type of students he has to address in his discourse. The mission of all spiritual teachers is to lift the students' vision to a higher plane, and therefore, in the beginning they have to be addressed, at the intellectual level at which they are, at the moment when they approach the Preceptor for further guidance.

According to the Upanishads, the Supreme by Himself in His own Self-will (*Swecchaya*) created the world with the play of His own *Maya-power*. After thus creating everything the subtle and the gross, both in the microcosm and the macrocosm,

He, the Supreme, as the light of the Sun is reflected in pools of waters, Himself "entered" into the pools-of-thoughts, to play therein as the *Jeeva*.

The Supreme manifested in the "total" mind-and-intellect (macrocosm) is *Parameswara*, the Lord, and the same Supreme functioning in the "individual" mind-and-intellect (microcosm) is the *Jeeva*.^{*} Just as the sun is unaffected by his innumerable reflection, so too, the Supreme Brahman is Immaculate and Uncontaminated by the play of joy and sorrow, called life, in which all individual *Jeevas* dance about.

The Supreme Brahman as Pure Consciousness functioning in a given equipment is the *Atman*. The Consciousness expressing through the body, mind and intellect, gives rise to the experiences as perceiver, feeler and the thinker—and all these three together constitute the individuality in each one of us.

Each one of us vividly experiences the entire world-of-objects around us. We have no doubts regarding the existence of the world, for we experience the existence of things and beings around us. Each "experience of the existence of a thing or a being" is called the *Knowledge* of them. When such an experience is closely observed, we shall find that it consists of two parts, the "existence of the thing" (*astittwam*) and our "consciousness of this existence" (*prakasakattwam*).

^{*} *Jeeva* is the individuality in each one of us.

“To what Mighty Power do these two factors of every experience—*existence* and *consciousness*—belong? Who is the One who plays the part of the world, the Jeeva and the Iswara, and yet is Himself the total Infinite Consciousness?”

“How am I to know this essential Reality of the Universe as the very Self in me? What exactly is the practice by which I can come to experience this Truth? What is the benefit that I shall gain by this realisation of the Universal Self?”

“How do you say that this Truth is non-dual? How does the great Self become the Knower of All, the Omniscient—the Creator of All, the Omnipotent?”

According to Acharya Sureswara, these are the doubts that would spring up in the minds of a student who has gone through all the preliminary studies of the Sastras. The opening stanza of this “Hymn to Sri Dakshinamoorthy” may be considered as an exhaustive reply to students who ask these fundamental question.

विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमानं नगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं
 पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया ।
 यः साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयं
 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ १ ॥

*Visvam darpana drisyamaana nagaree tulyam
 nijantargatam
 Pasyannaatmani maayayaa bahirivodbhootam
 yathaa nidrayaa
 Yah saakshaatkurute prabodhasamaye
 svaatmaana mevaadvayam
 Tasmai sree gurumoortaye nama idam sree
 dakshinaamoortaye*

विश्वं – the universe of names and forms; दर्पणदृश्यमान
 नगरीतुल्यं – like a city seen in a mirror; निजान्तर्गतं – one's
 own within; पश्यन् – recognising; आत्मनि – in the self;
 मायया – due to Maya; बहिः – outside; इव – as though;
 उत्प्लूतं – produced; यथा – as; निद्रया – in dream; यः –
 He who; साक्षात्कुरुते – experiences directly; प्रबोधसमये
 – at the time of realisation, स्वात्मानं – His own Self
 एव – alone; अद्वयं – Non-dual (Immutable); तस्मै – to
 Him; श्री गुरुमूर्तये – the Divine Teacher; नमः –
 Prostration; इदं – this; श्री दक्षिणामूर्तये – Shri
 Dakshinamoorthy.

1. He who experiences at the time of realization his own Immutable Self—in which the Self alone plays as the universe of names and forms, like a city seen in a mirror, due to the Maya Power as though produced outside, as in a dream to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy, is this prostration.

This opening stanza can be considered as containing the invocation of the Supreme by the author in all devotion for the successful culmination of his great work. It considers the South-fac-

ed Lord* as none other than the manifested form of the Infinite. The objects of the world, in fact, exist and play about only in the observer's mind, and yet, due to Maya, it is seen as though outside—as the reflection of oneself in a mirror.

By using this example, it is pointed out that the reflected image has no reality apart from the object reflected. Though the reflected image is of the same form as the object reflected, there is a lateral inversion of details in the reflection. The right side of the on-looker will be seen as the left side of his own reflection. Thus, sitting in front of a mirror, if you write with a pencil, the reflection would look as though it is writing with its left hand. This "lateral inversion" in our personality is that which is causing confusions and sorrows of life, called the *Samsar*. The Supreme—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*Satchidananda*)—when It gets reflected in the mind, is expressed as the world—non-existent, inert and sorrowful.

"If thus the world has an existence only as a reflection in the mind, then at all times it can only be experienced as an inner emotion; how is it that we are constantly experiencing the world-of-objects as definitely outside ourselves?" will be now the doubt in our mind. Acharya answers, "It is because of Maya", the non-apprehension of the

* Sri Dakshinamoorthy (श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तिः)

Truth. In order to elucidate this assertion, Sankara gives the analogy of the dream.**

Even though all of us know that the dream happenings in the dream-world, peopled by the dream crowd are all only experiences within, yet, *in the dreamer while the dream lasts*, the dream-world is definitely outside the dreamer himself. It is only on awakening he realises that the entire dream and its happenings were but figments of his own imagination, having an existence only within himself and that his mind was the very Substratum upon which the dream was playing.

In the same way the world of plurality, though they exist only within one's own mind, they are experienced as solid and substantial objects outside the experiences.

The perceived objects, in all the three planes of consciousness—waking, dream and deep-sleep—are all super-imposed upon the Infinite Self. "The Being who sports thus in the three cities—from whom has sprung up all diversities, He is the Substratum, the Indivisible Bliss-Consciousness and in Him alone the Three Cities go into dissolution."* "In me alone everything is born; in

** yatha nidraya (यथा निद्रया)

* Puratraye Kreedati yashcha jeevah
Tatasu jaatam sakalam vichitram
Aadhaaramanandamakhandaabodham
Yasminlayam yaati puratrayam cha

संस्कृत

—Kaivalyopanishad : Mantra 14.

me alone does everything exist and in me is everything dissolved. I am That Non-dual Brahman".** The pluralistic world-of-objects recognised are only the play of the mind—the Maya.

The opponents here argue, "if the world-of-objects (*Jagat*) is not outside but within ourselves and is part of our own personality, it can then never be ended." We answer that it need not be so. Because, while dreaming the dream-world is real to the dreamer, but on waking up the entire dream ends by itself. Similarly, on waking up to the Real, the world-of-objects, apparently seen as projected out is also transcended by the individual.†

This idea is, no doubt, very difficult to understand for one whose intellect is not fully integrated. Until an intellect, in the process of its growth unfolds fully the contemplative faculties inherent in

** *Mriyeva sakalam jaatam mayi sarvam pratishtitam
Mayi sarvam layam yanti tat brahma-advayamasnyaham*

मय्येव सकलं जातं मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

मयि सर्वं लयं याति तद्ब्रह्माद्वयमस्यहम् ॥

— Kaivalyopanishad : Mantra 19.

† *Anadi-Mayaya Supta Yada Jeevah Prabodhyate
Ajam-Anindra-Aswapnam Adwaitam Budhyatae Tada.*

अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदाजीवः प्रबुध्यते ।

अजमानिद्रमस्वप्नमद्वैतं बुध्यते तदा ।

— (Mandokya—I—16).

it, all subtle mystic declarations must remain unappreciated. Such philosophical heights cannot be reached by the relatively duller and grosser intellects. "He (the Self) of whom many are not able even to hear, whom many, even when they have heard do not comprehend; wonderful is a man, when found, who is able to teach the Self; wonderful is he who comprehends the Self, when taught by an able teacher."*

On waking up from one's identifications with body, mind and intellect, the world-of-plurality constituted of the bodily perceptions, mental emotions and intellectual thoughts roll away from one's experiences—as the dream does on waking. Beyond the three planes of consciousness the individual rediscovers his identity with the Pure Self the God-Consciousness.

This Infinite Reality Itself is the Guru. One who has realized in Himself this great awakening and has come to experience the one unconditioned Truth beyond the casual, subtle and grosser bodies,

* Sravanaya-api bahubhir yo na labhyah
Srnvanto pi bahavo yam na vidyuh
Ascharyo vakta kusalo asya labdha
Ascharyo jnata kusalanusistah.

श्रवणायापि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः
शृणन्तोऽपि बहवो यं न विदुः
आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धा
आश्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः

— Kathopanishad 2-7.

and who, thereafterwards, continues to teach the same Truth to others, is the Teacher.** The Guru helps the disciple to experience the Truth. In saying so it should not be understood that the Guru's teaching and the disciple's realisation have any cause-effect relationship. We cannot say that the teacher taught and, therefore, the disciple realised. The two verbs must be considered as having for themselves the one and the same subject: just as in a sentence like, "He is sitting and singing". The student takes the help from the teacher and the student himself realises the Truth. The teacher can never interfere.

By the grace of the true Acharya alone can we come to understand clearly and lucidly and without a trace of doubt or hesitation the pregnant suggestion of the Sastras. Having thus understood the Science of Reality (Sastra) the technique of realisation (*yogabhyasa*) begins. It is only an individual who has purified his mind by constant prayerful devotion to the Lord (*Iswara*) who can really apprehend the Truth Divine. The importance of the teacher has been very often emphasised in our Upanishads: "The one who has a teacher understands the Veda."* When the understanding becomes calm and refined, then in meditation, one

** Student of the Sruti and well-established in the Brahman :

"Srotriyam Brahmanishtam" (श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम्) —Mundaka 1-2-12.

* "Acharyavan Purusho Vedah"

(आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद)

—Chandogya Upanishad.

realizes Him, the Absolute" ** "It is gained only by him who wishes to attain It with his whole heart. To such an one the Self reveals its true nature."***

The term "he who" (*Yah*) in the third line of this opening verse is interpreted by some commentators as "the student himself", who is the seeker. In this case the meaning would become that the same person who earlier under *Maya* perceived the world (*Jagat*) outside, he himself, on waking, would now discover the end of *Viswa*-perception and realise and experience the Infinite.

In Vedantic literature, the need for a teacher has been very well recognised and in these ten stanzas the Teacher is repeatedly adored. The Supreme Reality Itself is the Guru. This Truth is Itself conceived as Sri Dakshinamoorthy.† this is the pose that Siva took while sitting on the peaks of Kailas to give the final initiation to the Rishis and seers.

'Gyanaprasadenṛ vishu idhasattwa Statastu Tam Pasyathae Nishkalam Dhyayamanah".

(शानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्वस्ततस्तु तं पश्यति निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ।)

—Mundaka 3-1-8.

*** "Yamae Vaisha Vrinuthae Thaena Labhya-Sthasaisha Atma Vivrunuthae Thanum Swam".

(यमे वैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ।)

—Mundaka Up. 3-2-3.

† Dakshine abhimukha yasya sah sa Dakshinamoorthy Siva.

(दक्षिणे अभिमुखः यस्य सः स दक्षिणामूर्तिशिवः)

Even today it is an unwritten tradition in the Himalayas that all Mahatmas there during the *Brahmamuhurtha*-time meditate facing south, and the seekers in the country are expected to meditate at the same auspicious hour, sitting down, facing north, towards the Himalayas. The Teacher and the Lord are here thus by suggestion considered as one.* Thus the Guru is the manifest-symbol of the primordial Truth, and to Him our prostration.

Salutations to the elders and the Lord, termed in Sanskrit as "namah", came from the famous *mantras* of the Vedic period, which all chanted while they offered their oblations into the fire. "Oh Lord Fire, this is not mine".† This term "this is not mine" has through long and careless usage got abbreviated to a mere 'namah'.

Thus, salutations and prostrations are physical expressions of a mental attitude of total surrender and complete dedication at the altar of our reverence. To surrender ourselves totally at the feet of the Lord and to feel our oneness with Him is namaskar.‡

* Guru Sakshat Siva Eva Na Samsayah. (गुरुस्साक्षात् शिव एव न संशयः)

† Agne Idam Na Mamah. (अग्ने इदं न मम)

‡ Swa-athmanam paramesware ekatwena samarpanam" is namskaram.

स्वात्मानं परमेश्वरे एकत्वेन समर्पणम् ।

The first two lines of this great verse are very significant, for here we have a description of the terms "Thou" in the great commandment of the Vedas (*Maha Vakya*) "Thou Art That" (*Tattwa-masi*) while the last two lines, describing the Teacher Dakshinamoorthy, indicate, by subtle suggestions the meaning and significance of the term "That" in the *Maha-Vakya*. From this angle of study the opening word of the third line "he who" or "that which" (*yah*), indicates the essential oneness of "Thou" and "That" This oneness of the individual-Self and the total-Self is the theme of the Upanishads.

In short, the stanza under review is looked upon as a summary of the entire Upanishads, and the rest of the seven stanzas as a commentary upon this opening verse.

Sri Sureswaracharya in his *Vartikam* brings out this idea of the oneness of the Supreme and the Teacher very crisply in his famous stanza* "There is no distinction between Iswara and the Teacher except in that one is the corporeal form of the incorporeal existence of the other. In fact he is like space, "all-pervading". This Essence Divine is conceived here as Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

* Iswara Guru-Rathmaeti Moorthy-Bheda Vibhaginac.
Vyomavat Vyapta Roopaya Sri Dakshinamoortaye namah.

Manasalloka 1-30

ईश्वरो गुरुरात्मेति मूर्तिभेद विभागिने ।
व्योम वद्व्याप्त रूपाय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥

There is a school of thinkers who consider that all philosophers bring into the obvious world unnecessarily an incomprehensible concept of Truth or God. According to them, "we perceive the world, and, therefore, the world must be real." Such hasty conclusions are not acceptable to any thinking man, and modern science will not touch such an argument even with the longest barge pole available!

Perceptions are almost always false. We *see* the sun moving, though we *know* that the sun is not moving;; we *perceive* the earth steady and motionless, though we *know* that the earth is revolving round its own axis. The mere movement of air warmed up by the midday sun is *perceived* as patches of water with waves and ripples in it—though we *know* that it is a mirage. Very often an ordinary post is misunderstood as a ghost; a rope as a serpent; a bit of shell as a silver-piece.

In all these examples the non-apprehension of Reality is the cause for the misapprehensions. When we have known the rope the serpent disappears; when we realise the post, the ghost vanishes. The non-apprehension of Truth causes the mis-apprehensions of it as a pluralistic world.

At this moment an intelligent student may find a doubt rising in his mind: "the non-apprehension of Truth can probably be due to the play of Maya,

but what Power creates the world-of-perceptions?" This possible doubt is answered in the stanza by the statement "by Maya" (*Mayaya*). The power of Maya inherent in the Reality has two definite expressions. It expresses knowledge (*Vidya*) and ignorance (*avidya*). Of these the ignorance (*avidya*) manifests in two obliging mischiefs, "the veiling of the real" (*avarana*) and "the projecting the show of the apparent" (*vikshepa*).

When the *veiling* power clods our intellect and its comprehensions, the mind starts *projecting* a delusory piece of imagination in the place of the real object. When the intellect could not detect the post, the mind projected the ghost-vision. Where *avarana* plays, *vikshepa* also asserts itself. To control *vikshepa* is to remove the "veiling", and to the extent the "veiling" is removed, to that extent the Reality is unfolded.* This Maya power is indeed very difficult to conquer, and yet, Lord Krishna, in the Bhagavad Geeta, promises that those who surrender unto Him they shall cross over the sorcery of Maya.*

In short, all the factors that constitute the world, as it is experienced by us, are indicated in

* Read chapter "Rise & Fall of Man" in Kenopanishad: Introduction.

** *Daivechyesha Guna Mayi Mama Maya Duratyaya
Mameva Ye Prapadyante Mayametaṁ taranti te*

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

— (Bhagavad Geeta. VII-14).

this verse. The individuality (*Jeeva*), the world (*Jagat*), the Creator (*Iswara*) are indicated by suggestions and the one Reality expressed in these various aspects is positively invoked, adored and devotedly worshipped in the form of Sri Dakshina-moorthy, the Great Teacher.

We have already indicated that the following stanzas are, as if it were, a commentary upon the pregnant imports of the opening stanza. The conclusion arrived at in the previous stanza can evoke many objections from ordinary rational thinkers. To answer them all is the second stanza now under discussion. The contents of this stanza must be considered a commentary upon the term "by the Power-of-Delusion" (*Mayaya*).

No intelligent man can readily accept from what little he knows that the Brahman the Supreme projects the world of plurality in Itself by Itself. A student after reflection will pause to ask—is the Atman then the inaugurator of this *Jagat*? Or, has the Self modified Itself to become the *Jagat*? And when the intellect thus moves ahead, in the logical process of one's thinking, one will have to admit that neither of them can be a true possibility. The Infinite consciousness cannot ever inaugurate an endless medley of inert and insentient world of matter, nor can the latter possibility ever happen, because, the homogeneous (*Niravayava*) Infinite Consciousness, Immutable (*Avyaya*) and Changeless (*Nirvikara*) cannot ever modify Itself to become the world.

Then is it that we have to accept the atheists' (*Charvakas*) theory that the atoms (*anoos*) of the four elements, earth, water, fire and air, are the only causes¹ for the world creation? Shall we accept the ideas propounded by the Logicians (*Naiyayikas*) who consider subtle-atoms *paramanus* as the cause of the world? There are the *Sankhyans* who champion the theory that the *Pradhan* is the cause for the world-of-multiplicity. None of these three theories is acceptable since neither the atoms (*Anoo-s*) nor the subtle-atoms (*Paramanus*) nor the *Pradhan* can be truly the cause of creation, because, all of them are essentially inert.

At the same time in the Upanishads we have got positive evidence in the clear declarations of the Rishis that the world had risen from the Supreme. "Truth is Eternal-Knowledge-Bliss".² From this the very concept of space, the subtlest of matter, had sprung".³ The Upanishads insist that "before creation there was only the Pure Existence."⁴ In our Scriptures there is a definite

1. The atheists accept perception alone as the only source of Knowledge (*Pramana*). So they do not accept the existence of the element Space (*Akasa*), since we cannot perceive it.

2 सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।

Satyam gnaanam anantam brahma—Taittiriya : II-1

3 तस्माद् वा एतस्माद् आत्मन आकाश संभूतः ।

Tasmaad vaa etasmaat aatmana aakasa sambhootah

— Taittiriya : II-1.

4 सदैव सौम्य इदं अग्र आसीत्.

Sadaiva soumya idam agra aaseet—Chandogya ; VI-2

pointer that this "Infinite Consciousness desired 'I shall become many'"⁵ and they also assert, beyond all trace of doubt, that "verily from this alone were all creatures born."⁶ Further, from this Omniscient, All-Knowing, whose intelligence Itself is thought, and through thought all these names and forms of the world-of-matter were born.⁷

To reconcile these seemingly contradictory assertions and mutually opposing theories, as met with in the Upanishads, is to discover the True philosophy taught by this Rishis. Sankara's *Adwaita* theory alone truly satisfies at once the rational demand of the head, the emotional thirsts of the heart and the supreme experiences of the mystics. According to Vedanta, creation could not have taken place from the Infinite, nor could it have happened ever from anything other than the Brahman. It cannot be that the Changeless Infinite has Itself to become the created world. And yet, there stands in front of us all, a solid world of objects-and-beings, for all of us to experience. The

5 सोऽकामयत बहुस्यां प्रजायेय इति ।

So-akamayata bahusyaam prajaayeya iti—Taitteriya II-8.

6 यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।

Yato vaa imaani bhootani jayyante—Taitteriya : III-1

7 यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद् यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः

तस्मादेतद् ब्रह्म नामरूपम ज्ञं च

Yeh sarvagnah sarvavit yasya gnaanamayam tapah.

Tasmaadetad brahma naama roopamannam cha

—Mundaka I-1-9.

Vedantic philosophers were never blind to these facts, nor did they close their eyes to the brilliant expositions of Truth by the Rishis.

Sri Sankara's theory of superimposition (*Vivartavada*) alone can satisfy all the statements of the Upanishads. "In the absence of a true knowledge of the nature of an object—in this condition of ignorance—that object is understood to be of a different nature, and when the real nature of the object is discovered—when the ignorance is ended by the right knowledge—all the misinterpretations end: this is the theory of superimposition. So long as the post is covered by our ignorance, the ghost vision is real. Under a beam of light when the "ignorance-of-the-post" comes to an end, in the newly dawned "knowledge-of-the-post", the false superimposition of the ghost-form also ends.

The nature of the reality is not experienced by us and, therefore, we in its place recognise the world of names and forms, of cross purposes, of negative tendencies, of sorrows and mortality. When the Truth is known, the perceived world of plurality itself is re-assessed and experienced as nothing but the Infinite Consciousness. However, it is true that the Vedantic theory accepts a relative-reality to the world of form, inasmuch as though it is unreal from the stand point of the Supreme, yet it has a temporary reality as long as the limited ego recognises it.

There should be a reality that exists behind the world of objects, or else, instead of our present experiences as "the pot *is*", "the chair *is*", "the table *is*", we would have had an experience of "pot *exists not*", "the chair *exists not*", the "table *exist not*". The existence of things is experienced by all, since the cause from which every object has emerged out is an Existent Being. Thus Vedantic philosophers directly bring home to the students that all things in the world have risen from the Reality, which is the nature of Pure Existence.

Continuing this logical enquiry they had arrived at some more serious conclusions. When the common "the pot *is*" or the "table *is*", or the "chair *is*" is analysed, we find that the experience of the "pot *is*" comes to us when we are *conscious* of the *existence* of the pot. Similarly, the experience of the "table *is*" becomes ours only when we are *conscious* of the *existence* of the table. That is to say, the existence of a thing is recognized only when Consciousness illumines it. If I am not conscious of the existence of my pair of horns, it means the horns are non-existent in me. So, whether a thing exists or not, it can be experienced only when we are conscious of the existence or when we are conscious of its non-existence.

In the light of the above, if the common experience of everybody that the "world exists" is analysed, we shall find that it is because we are *conscious of the existence* of the world. Just as a

pot has no existence apart from the mud, its material cause, so too, the world has no existence apart from the Supreme Existence (*Satta*) and the Supreme Consciousness (*Spurana*). Hence Vedanta Sastra declares that the world is the effect of Existence-Consciousness (*Satta Spuranatma karya*).

In the cause-effect relationship, for the conversion of the cause into effect, three things are unavoidable: the raw material, which is the material cause for the finished product, technically called in the Sastra as *Samavayee Karana*, and the machinery necessary for it, guided by an intelligent efficient cause, called as—*Nimitta Karana*. The mud is the *samavayee karana*, which is called in the Vedanta Sastra as the *Upadana Karana*, and the pot-maker at his wheel, the efficient cause, and his instruments are called as the instrumental cause (*Nimitta Karana*). Herein we know that the mud and the wheel alone cannot make a pot. Unless there is the efficient cause, an intelligent man, who wants this manifestation to be produced. He is the dynamic entity who lends his intelligence to the machinery to make it function according to his will. In the creation of the world, this *chetana-giver* is Iswara.

According to *Vaiseshikas*, *Naiyayikas* and *Sankhyans*, the effects express always the qualities of the cause. If according to them the cause for the world is *Paramanus* or *Pradhan*, both of them being inert, the world, an effect from them, should also be inert and non-existent.

Since we experience the world as existent and dynamic, full of joy and intelligence, the cause should necessarily be an intelligent, dynamic conscious principle.

In the contents of the stanza now under discussion we have a complete and unequivocal reply to these schools and their several branches, each propounding its own theories according to the logic of its particular argument.*

The stanza also answers another objection raised by other schools against the unquestionable and supremely authoritative declarations of the *Advaita* Philosophy. In the previous stanza it was already indicated that the Brahman, functioning through or conditioned by the *Maya* is Iswara, the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Annihilator of the world of finite object. It was also said therein that this very *Maya* itself is the imagination (*Samkalpa*) in the Supreme. There are very many schools of philosophers mainly dualists (*dwaitins*) and qualified-monists (*visishtadwaitins*), in short generally all the ritualists (Karma Kandins) who dispute against this theory of the Vedantins.

The Infinite and the Eternal can never be conditioned, and therefore, to them the declaration

* Such as the people who propound that it is all heredity, (*Svabhavavada*), those who propound that the Ultimate Reality is the condition of sleep, a complete annihilation of everything, the nothing-ness of the Nihilists (*Sunyavada*), the Saivas, the Pauranikas, etc.

that "the Supreme conditioned by Maya is Iswara"; is fantastic. But they forget that the vary *Maya* itself is only in the Supreme a *samkalpa*, a mere imagination. An average healthy man conditioned by his own imaginations can in a dream become a poor, unhealthy, dying individual! Thereby his status in society or the conditions in his life are not affected. All these schools and their arguments are met with successfully in this stanza.

बीजस्यान्तरिवाङ्कुरो जगदिदं प्राङ् निर्विकल्पं पुन-
 माया कल्पितदेशकाल कलना वचित्र्य चित्री कृतम् ।
 मायावीव विजृम्भयत्यपि महायोगीव यःस्वेच्छया
 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये २ ॥

*Beejasyaanta rivangkuro jagadidam praang
 nirvikalpam punah
 Mayaakalpitadesa kaala kalanaa
 vaichitriya chitree kritam
 Mayaaveeva vijrumbhayatyapi mahoa
 yogeeva yah svecchayaa
 Tasmai sree gurumoortaye nama idam sree
 dakshinaamoortaye*

बीजस्य - of the seed; अन्तः - within; इव - like अङ्कुर - the future tree (the embryos) जगत् - universe; इदं - this; प्राक् - before; निर्विकल्पं - unmanifest; पुनः - again; मायाकल्पित - created by Maya - delusory देशकालकलना वैचित्र्य चित्रीकृतं - due to the ply of Time and Space; मायावीव - delusory इव - like; विजृम्भयति - unrolls; अपि - also; महायोगी - a great yogi; यः - He who;

स्वेच्छ या – by His own free-will; तस्मै – to Him;
 श्रीगुरुमूर्तये – the Divine Teacher; नमः – Prostrations;
 इदं – this; श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये to Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

2. He who, like a juggler or a great Yogi, unrolls this universe just out of His own free-will—the universe, which before creation remained unmanifest, like the future tree in a seed, and has later on projected Himself out to be the world of endless variety, due to the delusory play of time and space, both the products of Maya—to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy, is this prostration.

This entire field of experience (*Jagat*) before (*Prak*) its creation was without any distinction such as we experience now in the play of the subject, object and their relationship. The experiencer, the experienced and experiencing distinctions were not there in the One Infinite Homogeneous Truth which alone was before creation.

“In the beginning, verily, Atman (Self) alone was this (the Universe) nothing else was active whatever.”

“Existence alone, Oh, Sweet Boy, was there before the creation.”

1 ॐ आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीत् नान्यात्किञ्चन मिषत् ।

Aum Aatmaa vaa idameka evaagra asect
 naanyatkinchana mishat—Aitareya Upanishad I-1.

2 सदेव सौम्य इदं अग्र आसीत् ।

Sadeva Soumya idam agra asect — Chandogya Upanishad VI-2.

Here Sankara has given us a most expressive example to indicate that the world-created is a projection upon the Supreme and that the world-possibility was already latent in the All-Full Truth. According to him, the world of manifested names and forms, so fully spread out in space and playing in the stream of time, was lying dormant in an unmanifest condition, as tree remains in the embryo of a seed. When the seed is placed in a favourable condition, the embryo asserts itself into its fullest manifestation as a tree. But in its seed-condition, the distinctions as trunk, branches, twigs, leaves, buds, fruits, etc., are not there, though they are potentially present in the embryo. Similarly, the world of names and forms were potentially, in their *vasana-forms*, in the Infinite.

To project them into manifestation is called creation. Naturally, the Creator, Iswara, is none other than the Supreme functioning through the total-*vasanas*, which is the potential world possibility lying dormant in the Supreme.

When these *vasanas* have matured sufficiently, they are ripe for expression, and borrowing their abilities and capacities from the Infinite, they manifest themselves to form the gross world and the daily actions of all the beings therein. Here the word '*punah*' meaning 'again' is to be understood as "at the time of creation" (*srishti samaye*).

This world-possibility, lying dormant in the Supreme expresses itself into names and forms

(*chitreekritam*), by the play of Maya and the Maya-created concepts of "time" and "space". Time and space are, we know, concepts of the intellect and without space things cannot *remain*. That which gives accommodation (*avakasa*) for things to exist, is called space (*akasa*). When once "space" is formed, objects automatically rise up to occupy them, they are continuously changing in the play of time.

Here Maya is nothing other than the total-mind-intellect-equipment, and the total-intellect conceives the total-space and projects "time". In the play of "time" and "space" the intellect perceives the eternal dance of objects and the needless play of beings, which experience is called the created world.

Here an intelligent man may analyse the example given and may most probably arrive at a crucial doubt.

(a) A seed germinates under certain favourable conditions such as moisture, sand, sunlight etc. Similarly, for the unmanifested world to manifest itself from the Infinite Reality, what are the auxiliary causes that should be present in order to hasten and finally accomplish this great projection of the world?

Again, there can be another doubt.

(b) "God creates the world outside," if accepted as a *defacto* statement, it is true, this stanza does not explain what exactly is the material cause³ with which the Creator is creating the world of forms and names.

Both these questions are answered by the second line of the stanza wherein it is declared that the creation is rendered possible by delusion and the delusion-created "time" and "space" concepts (*maya kalpita desa kala kalana*).

Iswara, by His indescribable power, Maya, creates the world through His own willing or imagination (*Swecchaya = Swa sankalpa matrena*). This process of creation without a material cause is illustrated and compared by the following similes—"as a juggler who creates a world of phantasy without any material (*mayaveeva*), or, "as the creation of a new cosmos by great Yogins" (*Mahayogeeva*) like Vishwamitra.

In the *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* we read *Yagnavalkya's* declaration of the same idea when he says "he (*Indra*) who is full in his glory and power, Iswara—by His own Maya power looks as though many".⁴ In many *Upanishads* we read again and again the Truth declared that He alone was

3. Material Cause = *Upaadaana Kaarana* : "yad anvitam kaaryam sadaa drasyate tad upaadaanam; yad avyabhichaari sanmaatira anugamyamanamasti tadeva sarvasya upaadaanam taccha Brahmaiva."

4. *Indro Maayaavi Pururoopayecyate* — *Brh.* 4-5-19.

both the material and the instrumental cause in the creation process: "Alone He Himself was, and from Himself He created"⁷⁵. "He became the moving beings and immovable things."⁷⁶

The Pure rationalists when they read the theory of creation in the Upanishads, may again ask the question how can Maya condition the Supreme? They forget that the creation is only to those who are looking at the world from the ego-bound attitude (*jeeva bhavana*). The very Maya is nothing but the mind and intellect equipment in an individual, and this Maya itself is only an imagination (*sankalpa*) in the Infinite.

When thoughts flow there is the intellect, and where there is the intellect, there is the expression of "time" and "space", and therefore, through them we experience the world of flux and finiteness. When these *sankalpas* have ended, Maya is conquered, and the Pure Self is recognised as Infinite and Eternal, Immaculate and Pure. When through imagination an individual dreams, his waking status never gets distorted by his dream experiences. Similarly, the Supreme has never modified Itself (*vikara*) to be the world.

5. तदात्मानं स्वयमकुर्वत्

Tadaatmaanam svayamakuruta — Taiteriyopanishad II-7.

6. सच्च त्यच्चाभवत्

Saccha tyacchaabhat—Taiteriyopanishad II-6.

The world-play—of creation, sustenance and destruction—is available as our experiences only during our state of delusion, and they all are ever only in Him. Remember, the apparent snake, crevice, stick and garland are all delusions of the one and the same reality, the rope.

Since Iswara creates the world of plurality with the help of His Maya power, and since the very material cause, (*upaadaana karana*) is Maya only, the theories of creation such as (a) the act of creation (*aarambhavada*), (b) the modification (*parinamavada*), (c) the theory that it is the “nature” of matter to manifest itself (*svabhavavada*), etc., springs from Brahman functioning as Iswara, the theory of nihilism (*sunyavada*) is also smashed. With the help of Maya (*Maya sahakaari*) Iswara creates the world just as the juggler (*Mayavee*) or the man of miracles (*Yogi*).

In short, in all these cases, it is only the will (*sankalpa*) of the Creator that creates the pluralistic phenomenal realms of experience. By His own desire, the Omnipotent projects the world: “He desired and through thought, constant and powerful, He created all these.”

Without the destruction of the previous condition, no new condition can manifest itself. The

7. स अकामयत स तपः तप्त्वा इदं सर्वं असृजत ।

Sa akaamayata sa tapas taptva idam sarvam asrujata

—Taittiriya II-6.

ball of mud must end to become the pot. The bud must die for the flower to appear, and the flower dies when the fruit emerges. This "chain of change" is the world. Therefore, the real cause that supports all these ever-changing effects cannot be anything belonging to this world-of-matter. When we investigate closely and scientifically we find that the childhood is not the cause for the youth, nor the youth the cause for the old age, but all these childhood, youth and old age are conditions of one and the same cause which is the Existence (*satta*) in the individual.

All thinkers admit that the effect is inherent and concurrent with the cause, and this is acceptable to all schools of philosophy.⁸ Naturally, therefore, the Supreme which is Pure Existence alone can be the cause for the entire manifested world.

The stanza opens with an example of the embryo in the seed and reinforces it with the example of the juggler and the Yogi. This is a deliberate act to avoid misunderstanding. In the case of the seed, when the tree emerges, the seed is destroyed. A student might understand that the Supreme Existence has exhausted Itself now because It has become the world of plurality. To remove this idea of modification (*parinama*) the example of the magician and the illustration of the Yogi's creation

8. कारणमन्तर्गतं कार्यमिति सर्वस्य सम्मतम् ।

Kaaranamantargatam kaaryamiti sarvasya sammatam.

are suggested in the same stanza along with the example of tree remaining unmanifest in the seed.

Applying the main idea of this stanza to the general confusions created by the philosophical schools at the time of Sankara, we can detect a new import in the opening two lines. The materialistic school of philosophy (*charvakas*) recognises only one source of knowledge and that is "direct perception" (*Pratyaksha*).⁹ The Kanadas and the Buddhists (*Kshanika-Vignana-Vadins*)— accept over and above the "direct perception", "inference" also as a source of knowledge. Sankhyans accept more than the "direct perception" and "inference", the "testimony of the wise" (*aapta vakyam*) also. The Naiyayikas (*Gautanikas*) accept "*upamana*" also over and above other three. Prabhakaras a sect among the Mimamsakas accept "*arthapathi*", while Bhattas, another school in Mimamsaka, consider "*Anupalabdhi*" (*abhava*) as another source of knowledge. The Vedantins accept all the above six sources of knowledge. Pauranikas consider two more as acceptable in their philosophy and they are "*sambhava*" and "*aitihyam*" (tradition).

-
9. इन्द्रियार्थ सन्निकर्षोत्पन्नं यथार्थज्ञानं प्रत्यक्षम् ।

Indriyaartha sannikarshotpannam yatharthaggnanam pratyaksham.

The Kanadas explain the world as the play of six fundamental things (*padarthas*)¹⁰ The San-khya, it becomes 25 with the addition of *Purusha* or *Iswara*.

All these and many more schools and sects of philosophers, their theories and arguments are all imaginations projected out from the Infinite as the tree from the seed. These emerge out due to the play of Maya.¹¹

Vedantins also champion the theory that God is the Creator of the world, but in this statement of the Vedantic philosopher, the word "Creator" is not to be understood in the sense in which we literally understand this simple term. That which modifies must necessarily be a victim of change and, therefore, always finite. God is Infinite and, thus, when we say He is the "Creator", we mean that He, like a king, by His presence alone, creates. His physical activities (*kartrutvam*) and enjoyments (*bhoktrutvam*) are peculiar in Him. In our case, activities and enjoyments affect us; they never can affect Him. This is the peculiarity of his "desire" (*iccha*) and this is so, because, Maya is

10. द्रव्य, गुण, जाति, कर्म, विशेष, संबन्ध
Dravya, Guna, Jaati, Karma, Vishesha and Sambandha.
11. They are—5 elements, 5 pranas, 10 indriyas and 4 inner equipments, all together 24.
12. इच्छा ज्ञान क्रिया रूपी माया
Icchaa gnaana kriyaa roopi maayaa.

under His control¹⁶ while we are under the control of *Avidya*. Thus through Maya alone the creation-process can be satisfactorily explained, and even final liberation (Moksha), through study of the Scriptures and practice of meditation, is but an endeavour within Maya.

To this great Power, who like a juggler or a great Yogi unrolls this Universe just out of His own free will, to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshina-moorthy, is this prostration.

13. Hence it is said—

यया कर्तुं यथा कर्तुं अन्यथा कर्तुमर्हति !
 स्वतन्त्रामीश्वरेच्छां के परिच्छेत्तु मिहेशते ॥

Yayaa kartum yathaakartum anyathaa kartumarhati
 Svatantraam Iswaracchaam ke par ichetumihesate

Introduction to Stanza III

So far, in the earlier two verses we had a thorough discussion upon the nature of the individual (*Jeevatma*) and of the Supreme *Param-atma*). The opening verse described the term 'Thou' in the great Vedic statement "That Thou Art".* In the following stanza the indicative meaning of the term 'That' was exhaustively explained as the great Reality from which the entire creation has sprung into manifestation, as a tree springs up from the embryo of the seed.

Now this stanza vividly brings home to us the oneness between the indicative meaning of "That" and "Thou". In the great Statement, *Mahavakya*, this oneness is declared by the term "*asi*".

We had already suggested in the earlier stanzas the Vedantic assertion that existence (*sat*) and the light of Consciousness (*Spurana*) are both the expressions of the Infinite. This idea has been fully described in the following stanza. All philosophers do not accept that the "existence" and "consciousness" are the nature of the Self. Some thinkers ask if these are the nature of the Self, how is it that the Self expresses these two only when It is playing upon an object? Is it not much

* "Tat Twam Asi"—Chandogya.

तत् त्वमसि ।

more logical to consider that "existence" and "consciousness" are the very nature of the objects?

They further point out that it cannot be that the Supreme reflects Itself upon the objects. Its nature of *satta* and *spurana*, since the Self has no form, and formless cannot be reflected, and again, that the *satta* and *spurana* cannot be the nature of the Self, pervading the objects, as fire permeates a piece of iron and makes it glow. For, the Supreme is without form, and therefore, It cannot permeate the objects, which have no separate existence from Its standpoint. Based upon these arguments, the objectors ask how one can accept that existence and illumination are lent to the objects by the Atman, the Self?

There is no such difficulty. The "serpent-on-the-rope" is perceived by the deluded one and at that time it has got both *satta* and *spurana*. On a closer enquiry, suddenly, the "serpent vision" disappears and the existence (*satta*) of the rope is recognised (*spurana*). In fact, the very illumination of consciousness (*spurana*) is existence.* The very light of *consciousness*, is pure existence, for, it is only when we become conscious of a thing that we say that the thing exists. A more exhaustive answer for the questions raised by the objector is the contents of this third verse.

* Chidroopassya Prakaasameva Tasy Sadroopatvam

चिद्रूपस्य प्रकाशमेव तस्य सद्व्यपत्तम् ।

According to some the cause of the world cannot be and is not Existence (*Satpadartha*), but it is, and it can only be, non-Existence (*asar*). They argue that pot is made out of the destruction of the mud, and therefore, the absence of the mud is the cause for the pot; similarly, in every other object created. According to them the cause is the immediate previous condition of the effect.* And thus they try to prove that the *jagat* must have risen from non-Existence (*asat*). They substantiate their arguments by quoting the statement of Upanishads,† “This world was *asat* before creation” and to break this contention and to establish the “theory of the existent-cause.”‡

यस्यैव स्फुरणं सदात्मकमसत्कल्पार्थकं भासते
साक्षात् त्वमसीति वेदवचसा यो बोधयत्याश्रितान् ।
यत्साक्षात्करणाद्भवेत् पुनरावृत्तिर्भवाम्मोनिधौ
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ३ ॥

Yasyaiva spuranam Sadaatmakam astakalpa-
arthakam bhasate
Saakshaat tatvamaseeti veda vachasaa yo
bodhayatyaasritaan
Yatsakshaatkarnaadbhavenna punaraavritir
bhavambhonidhau
Tasmai Sri gurumoortaye namah
idam Sri Dakshinaamoortaye

* Karya Niyata Poorva Vrithih Karanam
कार्यनियत पूर्ववृत्तिः कारणम् ।

† Asat va idam agra aseet
असद्वा इदमग्र आसीत्

‡ Sath-Karana-Vada.
सत्कारणवादः

यस्य - (He) whose; एव - alone; स्फुरणं - manifestation; सदात्मकं - nothing but the Reality; असत्कल्पार्थकं - as delusory objects; भासते - appears साक्षात् - direct enlightenment; तत् - That; त्वं - Thou; असि - Art; इति - Thus; वदेच्चा - with the Great Vedic statement; यः - He who; बोधयति - imparts; आश्रितान् - to those who have surrendered to Him; यत्साक्षात्करणात् - after the direct experience of which; न भवेत् - never shall; पुनः - again; आवृत्तिः - return to; भवांमोनिधौ - the ocean of worldly existence; तस्मै - to Him; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - the Divine Teacher; नमः - Prostration; इदं - this; श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये - Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

3. He, whose manifestations—which are themselves nothing but the Reality—appear as the objects of the world; He, who imparts to those who have surrendered to Him, direct enlightenment, through the Vedic commandment “That Thou Art”, and after the direct experience of which there is no more any return to the “ocean” of worldly existence.....to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy, is this Prostration.

This great Existence, that expresses through and illuminates all names and forms, is the Infinite Lord Sri Dakshinamoorthy and to Him this salutation. The objects of the world have no existence of their own, and hence Acharya Sankara describes the world as *AsatKalpaarthakam*: that which only “appears as the objects of the world”.

-
1. Asat-kalpaarthagam = Asatkalpakh = Asat Tulyah—Svatah Satya rahithah

The *existence* and *illumination* of the Self bring to our recognition and experience the objects of the world. They, in themselves, have neither an *existence of their own* nor the *light to illumine* themselves. We have already said that the "knowledge" of an experience is the experience and the awareness of the existence of the thing. This Existence-Consciousness, which is the Self, is the very Substratum (*adhistan*) and, therefore, this is the very cause (*karana*) of the world of objects (*jagat*). In the absence of this substratum, the delusory objects cannot be seen and recognised as projected upon It: where the rope is *not*, the serpent vision cannot be. We can, therefore, justifiably say that the ultimate cause of the serpent is the rope in the sense, that the "existence" of the rope leads its "existence" to the non-existent delusory-projection of the serpent-form by the mind.

Thus, all names and forms recognised and experienced all around in the world are delusory, and, therefore, the Upanishads negate them, and indicate the Supreme Self: "Here there is none of the plurality".² In order to remove from us the sense-of-reality in the delusory, and therefore, the unreal world-of-objects, we must gain a personal experience of that which is indicated by the great declarations (*Mahaavakyaas*) of our Scripture, the Vedas.

2. *Neha Nanaasti Kimchana* — Brah. Up. 6-4-90.

To accept as real (*Satyabuddhi*) the world of false mental-projections (*Asatya Prapancha*), and thereafter, to allow ourselves to be deluded by these very projections with a firm and ardent faith that they alone constitute the truth, is the very source of all sorrows of existence (*samsar*). A clear understanding of the deep imports suggested in the *Mahavakyas*, through the study of their expositions with the help of a proper teacher, is the method by which we can remove our misconceptions and come to rediscover the Pure Infinite and Eternal Reality as our essential nature.

This salutation is to Parameshwara Himself in the form of the teacher who instructs, helps and guides all those who have surrendered to Him. Through a study of, and discussion upon the secret meaning of the *Mahavakyas*, this great awakening, this reassertion of the Self, can be brought about as a personal experience in the student.

Here the Dwaitins raise their objections, "how can the limited and the unlimited, the mortal and the immortal, be one and the same, even if the Vedas declare it to be so?" Such a doubt cannot stand against a closer study. These distinctions indicated here by the objector, are all created due to the equipments and the conditionings. The Upanishads declare that when once these equipments are removed, that which vitalises and functions through these equipments, is one and the same

Reality. The equipments (*upadhis*) are super imposed by the mind, in its delusion upon the Im-mutable Substratum (*Avyaya Adhishtana*).

If we meet a child at a certain time and place and, several years later, meet the same child now grown into a man we are likely to say that "that child is this man". This term though seemingly defining two entities on analysis will be found to be an expression used to define one and the same person.³ It is in this fashion that the great Mahavakya "That Thou Art" (*Tatwamasi*) indicates one Infinite Truth.

There are three distinct techniques employed generally in elucidating and understanding the real import of statements and declarations made in any language. These techniques are called in Sanskrit as *Lakshanas*. These three main *Lakshanas* employed in philosophy. They are *Jahallakshana*, *Ajahallakshana* and *Jaha-dajahallakshana*.

Besides the obvious meaning (*mukhyartha*), a word has also a secondary sense (*Lakshyartha*). In case the obvious meaning of a word does not fit in the context in which it is used, the secondary meaning is to be accepted. Thus, in the statement 'the village on the Ganges' the obvious meaning of the word 'Ganges' viz. the river, is renounced,

3. *Samaanyadhikaranam*—This is used when the same entity is indicated by two seemingly different pronouns as "that Mr. Gupta of Banares is this revered Swami of Puri"

and the bank which is related to river is accepted, to mean 'the village on the Ganges bank', This is known as *Jahallakshana*, where the obvious meaning of the word is renounced and the secondary sense thereof accepted.

Ajahallakshana is found where instead of renouncing the obvious word meaning, something more is added to the statement, in order to arrive at the correct meaning indicated by the statement; for example, "the white ran"; the adjective "white" cannot itself run, and therefore, it is understood as the 'white horse' ran. Here the term 'horse' is added to the statement made. This technique is called *Ajahallakshana*.

In the third technique termed as *Jaha-da-jal-lakshana* a part of what is said is renounced, and a part is added, thus together we arrive at a clear meaning. This technique is also called as "*bhaga-tyaga-lakshana*".

The former two methods cannot be employed in elucidating the meaning of the *Mahavakyas*, and therefore, we apply the third technique, "*bhaga-tyaga-lakshana*". "That" and "Thou" standing for *Iswara*, the creator, and *Jeeva* the created, both are distinctly different from each other in their manifestations because the equipments of one is so distinctly different from the other's. The Supreme conditioned by Maya is *Iswara*, while the same Supreme conditioned by

Avidya is the *Jeeva*. *Rejecting* the equipments—*Maya* and *Avidya*—to come to realise the Oneness of the Pure Consciousness, that functions in both of them, is the truth indicated in the Mahavakya, "That Thou Art".

Here again, another set of objections may arise in accepting this Vedantic conclusion. According to them this experience of the Reality may be a temporary one, and the normal condition of mortality and confusions might again revive, as the sorrows of the world come back, when we wake up from the sleep.

This fear is unfounded. Once having experienced this Oneness we need not fear of our return to our earlier delusions, because, the Upanishads guarantee that there will be no return. "The Knower of the Self goes beyond all sorrow"; "The Knower of Brahman becomes the Brahman"; "He shall no more return" is thrice repeated in the close of the Upanishads.

In the individual (microcosmic) sleep and in the total sleep (macrocosmic) called as Pralaya, the vasanās (*Moola Avidya*) still remain, and hence, the individual and the world must return. When this is destroyed through the knowledge gained by the *Maha Vakyas*, to the One liberated thus, there is no return to Samsar.

4. Tarati Sokham Atmavit—Chandogya VII-2-6.
5. Brahmvit Brahmaiva Bhavati - Mundaka III-2-1.
6. Na Sa Punaravertate

The experience of change through the misinterpretations of the mind and intellect (*samsar*) is described as an ocean (*Ambonidhi*) very often in Vedantic literature, for it is difficult to cross (*apaara*), it is very deep (*agadha*) and, also, it is very difficult for an individual, unaided, all by himself, to swim and cross over (*dustara*). A teacher, a guide, is unavoidable. He who guides us across our confusions, and leads us to self-realization, to that teacher Sri Dakshinamoorthy, be this salutation.

There are very many schools of pluralistic philosophy (*dwaitins*) in which they champion different types of relationship between 'That' and 'Thou'—between God (*Iswara*) and individual (*Jeeva*). Closer observation shall reveal to us that no relationship is ever possible except of a total and complete identity and consequently of a perfect oneness.

For example, the following relationships are advocated by the different schools of Pluralists:

- (a) the whole and the limb relationship (*Amsa-amsee bhava*): just as the palm and the fingers.⁷
- (b) the substance and its modification relationship (*Vikara-vikari bhava*): like, milk transformed or modified into curd;

7. Karangulyadi vat.

- (c) the total and complete difference (*atyanta bheda*): is the only relationship: as light and darkness.

If the above three are the theories propounded by the main groups of the dualists, there are very many groups among them, who propound their own minor theories such as Cause-Effect relationship (*Kaarya- Kaarana bhava*). Species-Specimen relationship (*Jathi-Vyakthi bhava*) and Substance-Property relationship (*Guna-Gunee bhava*).

Only the Non-dualists, who recognise the complete oneness of the Infinite Reality, explain the relation between "That" and "Thou" as a mere delusion.⁸

It cannot be (a) or (b), i.e., the individual cannot be part (*amsa*) or a modification (*vikara*) of the Supreme, because, the Supreme is partless and changeless, but, the Geeta has declared, "a part of Me, the Eternal, has become the living world", and the Upanishads say: "all selves rise from the Supreme Self as sparks from the fire, etc."⁹ Thus the Dualists quote the Sruthi and the Smrithi in order to establish their fanciful theory.

8. Anyatarasya Anyatara bhava.

9. Mamaivaamso jeeva loke jeeva bhutah sanatanah—Geeta XV-7.

10. Sarva eta aatmaano vyuchyaranti—Brah. Up. IV-1-20.

This cannot be accepted as they will contradict an endless number of major Upanishadic declarations, where it has been repeatedly declared how the Infinite had entered to dynamise the equipments, "Having created it, Himself entered it".¹¹ "This Atman remains ever-present in every one as *Jeeva*",¹² "That Self Himself entered the entire body, even to the tip of the fingers";¹³ "He having created this whole on the crown of the head, through that gate-way entered";¹⁴ "He who has entered within, the doer of all..."¹⁵ Thus, and in many other Upanishads, we have clear declarations of the God assembling the forms and Himself entering them. But we should not overlook that even the very creation and the entering into them are themselves delusions.¹⁶

The dualists ask very innocently "why not consider the Lord's entry into the body just as rice into the pot, or as the seed into the fruit"? This cannot be accepted because the Infinite must always be partless (*Niramsa*) and changeless (*Nirvikara*).

-
11. Tat Srushtwa tadevanupravisat—Taitt. UP. II-6
 12. Anena jeevanaatmaanah anupravisya—Chandogya VI-3-2.
 13. Sa Iha Pravishtha Anankhagrebhyah—Brah. Up. III-3-4.
 14. Sa Etadeva Seemanam Vidaaryaitaya Dwara Prapadyata
—Aitereya I-3.
 15. Antah Pravishtam Kartaarametam—Swetasvatara III-11.
 16. Maaya tat Kaarya Sanghatah.

Also this assumption would be against the *Sruthi*¹⁷ and logic (*Yukti*) of thought. The Truth is described as "Eternal, of Infinite forms, All-pervading, Subtler than the subtlest, Immutable".¹⁸ In the *Geeta* we read "this Infinite is declared to be Immutable, Unthinkable, Changeless."¹⁹

If the arguments raised by those who champion the "whole and the limb relationship" or the "substance and modification relationship" are accepted, then after the phenomena of creation has once taken place, God can no more exist. In fact, such a modification (*vikara*) is impossible in the Infinite, because, in the Formless, Partless, Pure Consciousness²⁰ any kind of change is impossible.

Since neither division nor modification is possible in Him, He must be All-pervading (*Vibhu*) and the only explanation acceptable is that which the Vedantins propound, perfect identity. The Upanishads illustrate this to us by pointing out the relationship between the outer space (*Mahaa-kasa*) and the space in a pot (*Ghatakasa*). Here, in both the cases, the space as *such* is one and the same. Conditioned by the walls of the pot,

-
17. Nishkalam Nishkriyam Saantam Niravadyam Niranjanam
—Swetasvatara Up. VI-19.
 18. Nityam Vibhum Sarvagatam Susookshmam Tadavyayam
—Mundaka I-1-6.
 19. Avyaktoyam Achintyoyam Avikaaryoyamuchyate—Geeta II-25
 20. Amoorte Niravayave Sanmaatre.

the pot space, for all practical purposes, has an apparent separate existence, apart from the outer space surrounding it. But conceived as space, the spaces in all pots are none other than the one outer space, which is everywhere present, and in which the universes are moving.

The dualists consider the Mahavakya "That Thou Art" as a mere *glorification* and *eulogy* of the devotee (*upasaka*). According to the Dualists this is chanted for the purification of the individual, so that he may become fit for performing the ritual! This cannot be accepted by any serious student of the Upanishads, because of the context in which this statement appears in our Scripture. "One alone, the Non-dual Reality, Pure Existence alone, Oh Smart Boy, existed before all this creation."²¹ And with this statement a discussion started on the Chandogya Upanishad, and, in the same chapter, this discussion ends with "This Atman alone is all this."²² Hence the argument that the Mahavakya (*Tattwamasi*) is in praise and glorification (Sthuthi-kalpna) of the devotee becomes totally untenable indeed.

Nor can it be a relationship of "similarity" (*Saadraya*), because, according to some, the relationship between the Jeevas, and God is like the

-
21. Sad Eva Sowmya Idam Agra Asect, Ekameva Adwiteeyam
—Chandogya Up. VI-2-1.
22. Yatad-atma Yadidam Sarvam — Chandogya Up. VI-8-7.

fire-sparks and the fire. What similarity can there be between the actionless (*Nishkriya*) and partless (*Niravayava*) Truth and the many-limbed world of constant activities?

Nor can it ever be, as it is suggested by some, a cause-effect relationship, because Truth is One, Non-dual, Partless and no change can ever happen in It. Therefore, He cannot be the cause, as He produces no effect.²³

None of the above relationships can give us a satisfactory hypothesis, although they all seem to be acceptable at certain levels of our investigation and at some lower planes of enquiry each one of them strike us as convincing. When the entire Cosmos is viewed as a whole, the relationship, between the manifested and that from which it is manifested, can be expressed only by the theory that they are both one and the same essential Reality, functioning as the Creator and the Created. This theory of the Vedantins (*Saamanyadhi-karana*) not only explains the phenomena but also justifies all the declarations of the Rishis in the Upanishads.

Other arguments that we have indicated which propounds the species-specimen relationship (*Jathi-Vyakthi-Bhav*), or the substance and its

23. *Niravayavathvaat Ekam Adwiteeyatam cha Aarambhattwa Anupapattih.*

property relationship (*Guna-Gunee bhav*) can stand nowhere. Cow is the species (*jathi*) and the red cow is the specimen (*vyakthi*). If the substance (*Gunee*) is God and His property (*Guna*) is Samsar, the miserable God will be permanently in Samsar, and this Samsar will eternally remain, because, the "properties" must remain with the "substance" for all times. In short, all other Rishi-declarations, which seemingly support these different view points, are all mere secondary statements (*aupacharika*), while the main emphasis in the Upanishads is upon the essential oneness between Creator and the Created. In Chandogya we find that this *Mahavakya* has been repeated nine times, again and again, until Swetaketu, the student in the Upanishad, realised the entire import of this significant statement.

The differences in manifestation are all due to the texture, composition and quality of the equipments, constituted of the 5-sheaths (*pancha-kosah*)²⁴ the inner equipments (*anthakaranah*)²⁵ and the tendencies (*vasanas*), cultivated by us in our actions and thoughts in the course of our past experiences. These are all moulded and constituted so differently in each individual that the one Life playing through them manifests so differently in the different equipments. If these equipments

-
24. Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vignanamaya and
Anandamaya.
25. Made up of Mana, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara.

are removed—if all bulbs are removed—what remains behind is the One Uncontaminated, Ever-liberated, Pure Consciousness alone.²⁶ To realise this is to experience the Highest unfoldment”, from where there is no return.²⁷

INTRODUCTION TO STANZA IV

So far we have gathered from the previous stanzas that the Consciousness in the individual and the Reality behind the whole universe is one and the same. The Atman in the individual is the Brahman, which is the Substratum for the entire manifested world. To realise this oneness is the means of total liberation from all the thralldom of imperfections and from all experiences of change.

It was also explained to us that this Atman is the one that lends existence (*satta*) and illumination (*spurana*) to all objects-of-experiences. It was concluded that the world-of-object has no “existence” or “awareness” of its own. At this junction in our understanding, a student of philosophy may perhaps wonder why the Vedantic philosophers are so particular in introducing this mysterious factor, the Atman, in order to explain our daily experiences of the world outside.

Daring materialists, such as modern scientists, biologists, psychologists and others, would love to accept that “Consciousness” and “Existence” are

26. Nirmala, Nityamuktha Suddha Satchinmayamatra.

27. Yad Gattwa Na Nivartante — Geeta XV-6.

inherent nature of the very realm of matter. They would love to explain Consciousness as the "glowing of the nerve tips" in the brain! But no true philosopher can accept such a vague statement, which is obviously a fallacious conclusion arrived at by the immature thoughts built upon incomplete data.

In case we accept that the world-of-objects has an "existence" of its own and that existence (*satta*) and awareness (*spurana*) are both the very inherent nature of matter, it will be contradicting our experiences in life. According to the objective scientists of modern times, the world *is* existence, while to the subjective scientists, the philosophers of India, the world *has* existence. There is a lot of difference between the assertion that the ever-perishing world of matter *is* existence, and the declaration that the changing phenomena have existence: the phenomenal world is a play of matter upon Existence, and that the Eternal Principle of Existence expresses Itself in and through all changes.

In case we accept that the objects of the world have an "existence" of their own (*Svathassattatvam*) and thus contradict totally the saner conclusions of the Vedantic philosophers,* then the

* Atma Sathe prakasaabhyameva jayato hi sattah prakasow-by the Existence Awareness of Atman alone the world of objects have "existence" and "awareness".

world of change would have been impossible. The objects of the world, we know have at every moment their formation (*utpathi*) and decay (*vinasa*). The Eternal Existence being Changeless, birth and decay can never take place in It, and therefore, the world of objects and beings should have ever remained the same. On the other hand, our experience is that the objects change. The world-of-matter is conditioned by Time, and since Time is ever changing, the objects too are ever-changing. The Awareness that illumines the changing Time as well as the changing object is the Changeless observer (*sakshi*) of all changes and It is Itself Immutable and Eternal. Thus, to accept the hasty conclusion of the scientists would be against perception (*pratyaksha*) and experience (*anubhava*) of all intelligent people in the world.

In the previous stanzas, the terms "That" and "Thou" of the *mahavakya* were analysed and their essential oneness was indicated. In his discussions there, Acharya Sankara brought forward arguments from the Scriptures. In the following three continuous stanzas the same idea is being discussed in the light of our own day-to-day experiences.

In our common everyday experiences we know that the pot 'exists' and that the pot is 'illuminated'. Therefore, existence (*asthithwam*) and illumination (*Spurana*) are both in the objects. There is no necessity to drag an Iswara into it, to lend the object His "existence" or His "illumina-

tion” for the object. These two are the very nature of the pot. To an objector who thus argues, the stanza under discussion is indeed a convincing reply.

नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहा दीपप्रभा भास्वरं
 ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा बहिः स्पन्दते ॥
 जानामीति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्संस्तं जगत्
 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ४ ॥
Nanachidraghato dara sthita
mahadepa prabha Bhasvaram
Janam yasyatu chakshuradi—
karana dwara bahispandate
Janameti tameva bhanta manu
bhatyetasamastam jagat
Tasmai Sri gurumortaye nama
idam Sri dakshinamortaye.

नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभा भास्वरं - (Just like) the bright light of a great lamp placed in a jar having many holes; ज्ञानं - knowledge; यस्य - whose; तु - indeed; चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा - through eyes and other sense organs; बहिः - outside; स्पन्दते - flashes; जानामि - “I know”, इति - thus; तं - Him; एव - only; भान्तं - illumining; अनुभाति - after whose light shine; एतत् - this; संस्तं - whole; जगत् - universe of objects; तस्मै - to Him; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - the Divine Teacher; नमः - Prostrations इदं - this; श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये - to Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

4. He whose intelligence “flashes” outside through the eyes and other sense-organs, just like the bright light of a great lamp placed in a jar having many holes, and after whose shine this

whole universe of "objects" shines....to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy, is this Prostration.

The stanza opens with a beautiful picture which explains the "theory of perception" in Vedanta. The Infinite Consciousness by Itself never illumines anything inasmuch as in the Absolute Awareness, there are no objects for It to illumine. Electricity itself has no incandescence; only when the current passes through the filament it bursts into its light-manifestation. Similarly, when Consciousness functions in the intellect, that "beam of light" reflected by the intellect, is the *intelligence*, by which we come to illumine the objects of the world outside.

When this Light of Consciousness (*Atma-Chaitanya*) reflected at the inner equipment (*anthakarana*) riding on the mind, goes out through the sense-organs and reaches the objects to illumine them, we see that we have the *knowledge* of the object. The Light of Intelligence can beam out from within us on the world outside through the many pores in the physical body.¹

The Light of Consciousness thus emanating from the Intellect, when it passes through the eyes

-
1. They are the two eyes, the two nostrils, the two ears, the mouth and the innumerable sensory buds on the tongue and the skin.

becomes the "power of vision" illumining the forms and colours, while the same Light of Consciousness reflected in the intellect and escaping through the ears becomes peculiar *light* that can illumine the sound. Thus each sense-organ can illumine only a definite field of sense-objects, and all of them are the same "intelligence" functioning through the five different sense-organs.

In the Upanishad also this idea has been described beautifully as the seven flames that shoot out through the seven holes in the face "From Him are born the seven *pranas*, the seven flames, seven-fuel, the seven-fold oblations, as also the seven worlds where the *Pranas* move in the cave of living creatures; seven and seven".²

Borrowing this idea, Sankara illustratively demonstrates here the phenomena in the picture of a pot with many holes, with a bright light burning within and the beams of its inner illuminations shooting out through these holes.

The objects of the world are all mere superimpositions upon the Self, and the existence of the delusory object is not experienced by an individual until *he sees* the object. That is to say, this book has no existence for me until I see the book. Thus an object can exist only when the "existence" in me lends the objects an "existence" of its own.

- २ सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात्
 सप्त अर्चिषः समिधः सप्त होमाः
 सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणा गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त ।

Mundaka-II-1-8

Existence is All-pervading. Therefore, the pot was also always permeated by Existence. But the "existence" of the pot was lying veiled behind my ignorance of it. The intelligence in me, passing through the sense-organs, when it reaches the "place of the pot" (*ghata-desa*), it is not in fact giving the pot an "existence" but it only removes the ignorance that veiled it. In short, the equipments of perception emotions and thoughts are only for the removal of ignorance and for the *creation* of these objects, meaning, sense-organs do not give "existence" to them; the objects already have "existence", since everything is always graced by the All-pervading Pure Existence.

The stimuli of the world outside (*Indriya Vishayas*) when contacted by the intelligence, riding on the mind, moulds the mind into the exact shape of the object, and thus the mind is disturbed by the stimuli received. These disturbances in the mental pool are considered as though waves (*vrithi-s*) and this is illumined by the Light of Consciousness.³

Thus every wave-of-thought is illumined by the awareness and when the Light of Conscious-

३. आत्मनः सच्चिदंशश्च बुद्धेर्ज्ञानिरिति द्वयम् ।

संयोज्यचाविवेकेन ज्ञानामीति प्रवर्तते ॥

"By the indiscriminate blending of the two—the Existence-Knowledge-aspect of the Self and the thought-wave of the intellect—there arises the notion of "I know" —Atma Bodha, 25.

ness illumines the thought-waves they become my experiences (*Janami ithi*= I know). This is the truth in all experiences, and therefore, Sankara defines this great Truth as That "in whose Divine-light this whole universe of 'objects' shines". The Upanishads repeat the same idea, "by His Light all these are illumined".⁴ The same mantra is repeated again in Kathopanishad. By this line, therefore, Sankara indicates that it is by the Light of Consciousness (*Atman*) that all these objects are illumined, and that the objects have no light of their own.⁵ It is evidently clear now that the knowledge of objects is not because of the objects themselves, but because of the play of Consciousness, through the instruments of perception, upon the objects.

Even this act of illuminating the objects is not a function of the Self: the Self is *actionless*, because It is *Partless* (*Niravayavatvaat*). This function of illuminating things is only a superimposition upon It, when man observes, with his intellect, the play of Life in the world. This is just as unscientific as when we attribute to the sun the function of illuminating when we say "the sun

4. Tameva Bhamtam anubhati sarvam Tasya bhaso sarvam idam vibharti
—Mundaka II-2-10.

तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ।

5. Na Svathah iti Akshara Yojana.—Vartikam.

न स्वत इति अक्षरयोजना ।

illuminates the objects". This is not a function of the Sun; on the other hand, illumination is the very nature of the Sun, in whose presence, objects gather for themselves a glow of their own. That which is the nature of an object cannot be its function; for, to say, "Ramu is very busy breathing" would be a ridiculous statement, since breathing is the very nature of the living Ramu.

At this juncture it is very interesting to follow the close observations and conclusions arrived at by the Rishis in this ordinary "activity of knowing". All intelligent creatures know at every moment one thing or the other. "I know—I know—I know"—is the continuous experience of every intelligent creature. When this ordinary "activity of knowing" is observed, it is found to resolve itself into two distinct stages, though they almost always happen in instantaneous succession: (a) I know it (*Janami iti*). Here the Consciousness is in contact with the objects. Thereafterwards It comes back to the bosom to rest and to enjoy them as "I have known" (*Gyate maya iti*).

The Lord within (Atman) expresses Himself as two mighty forces, the power to act (*Kriya sakti* and the power to know. The "power to act" in the Lord expresses itself in the flight of the Consciousness, riding on the mind, through the sense-organs to the objects, moulding the mind-stuff into the forms of the objects. This is the stage described above, "I am knowing" (*Janami iti*).

The "Power to know" (*Gnana sakti*) illumines this mental formation after the mould of the object is formed within, when we experience the joy of "I know it" (*gyatemaya iti*). In these two fields of functions—as observed by students of self-analysis—the Lord (*Isa*) is the Self conditioned by the personality layers. (*Antahkarana Upahita Paramatma*). He is both the doer (*karta*) and the knower (*Gynata*). Here the "knower" means, one who is aware, and since He becomes conscious of both joy and sorrow, is also the enjoyer (*bhokta*). The Lord who identifies with these "sense of doership" and the "sense of enjoyership", becomes then the limited, sorrowful, sobbing, ego (*Jeeva*).

The objects of the world have no light of their own; the illumining Principle is the *Atman* alone: "The Brahman is Eternal, Knowledge, Infinite"; "that from which these beings are born; that by which having been born these beings live and continue to exist; and that into which, when departing, they all enter."⁷

-
6. Satyam Gnanam Anantam Brahma—Taitte. Up. II-1.

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।

7. Yato Va Imani Bhootani Jayante. Yena Jatani Jeevanti.
Yat Prayantyabhisamvisanti—Taitt. Up. III-1.

यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते, येन जातानि जीवन्ति,
यद्वयन्त्यमिसंविशन्ति ।

This Atman the Self is considered by the Sastras at three distinct levels of our comprehension and experience. Impure (*kalushita*), with disturbance (*savikalpa*) and undisturbed (*nirvikalpa*). In the imperfect and disintegrated matter-layers, the Light of Consciousness and Its divine nature manifests Itself as extremely disturbed and therefore ugly (*kalushita*). In the muddy mind and stormy intellect, the Supreme manifesting in dim and horrid expressions is the imperfect perfection experienced through the disturbed mental equipment, and it is then called by the term *kalushita*.

When all such agitations have ended, and when a purified intellect (*sadbuddhi*) is constantly contemplating upon the great statement, Mahavakya, "I am Brahman" (*Aham Brahmasmi*), with no other distracting, dissimilar, thought currents, it is experienced as veiled perfection (*Savikalpa*).

When even this, meditator-meditated-meditation relationship has been eliminated, and the meditator has merged with the meditated, the experience of this Absolute Oneness is called the experience of Perfect Perfection (*Nirvikalpa*).

This experiencing of the Perfect Perfection is dimmed by agitations (*Rajas*) and darkened by inertia (*tamas*). These gunas together constitute the nescience (*avidya*). To redeem the Self from these veils and to rediscover The Self fully after

destroying the *avidya* is the realisation Supreme. One who himself has achieved it, is the true Teacher. This Parameswara-Truth experienced beyond *avidya* is Sri Dakshinamoorthy, which is of the nature of Self-illumination—to Him this prostration.

Introduction to Stanza V.

To the intellect of man the world around him has an endless fascination. The miracles of nature are, to the observant man, at once a charm and a challenge. It not only gratifies his flesh, but it soothes his heart and urges his intellect to enquire, discover and conquer. This reaction of the world upon the fully awakened intellect of man is that which had paved the grand road to the scientific age of our times.

This fascination has enraptured not only the objective scientists but it had a cadence of limitless enchantment to the contemplative seekers and many were driven to a subjective quest. From the dawn of civilization men of the required calibre had always been trying to unravel the depthless mystery of this universe and reach at the Reality behind the manifest world of plurality. A variety of theories have been propounded, and conclusions arrived at, by different people in different periods of history, and in each of their conclusions they seem to have plumbed a depth which is directly proportional to the growth and development

of the intellect of their era. The subtler contemplators reached the deeper depths in search of the Substratum.

Thus from time immemorial thinking men have been trying to codify their observations in an attempt to come to understand the play of life. They constantly endeavoured to crystalise their thoughts into declarations, voicing forth what they finally thought was the ultimate Reality of life. At various periods of history different schools thus sprang up, each one arriving at and championing its own formula for Reality, based upon its own observations and conclusions. No doubt they differed among themselves and each one fought almost tooth and nail with all others, but a careful student looking at all these can arrive at a more sublime conclusion, which is but the accepted declaration of the Vedantins.

To mention but a few of the very important landmarks in their investigations upon the Reality, we may mention the following six theories propounded by different great intellectuals who arrived at these declarations through their own systematic thought-processes and their inevitable logical conclusions:

(1) There are some who declare that the entire life of change that we see in front of us is itself the Reality. The pictures painted on a wall need no other Reality other than the wall. Simi-

larly for the picture of this world and its experiences there need not be any wall other than this body; the body alone is the Reality. All functions, 'I am coming, I am going, I am sitting' etc., are all functions of the body, all declarations 'I am fat, I am lean' etc., are all conditions of the body; therefore, body alone is the Reality.

(2) Others, more subtle thinkers, contradicted the earlier Body-Reality theory (*deha-atma-vada*). Their observations too are scientific. When the sense-organs are not functioning, the body is dead; when they function, the body also functions. Therefore, they concluded, the Reality is the sense-organs and not the body. In the presence of the sense-organs alone life is in the body, as seen daily in, I see, I hear, I smell', etc.

(3) The above Sense-Reality theory (*Indriya-Atma-vada*) was proved hollow by still subtler thinkers. They observed that even when the sense-organs are not functioning, as in deep sleep or swooning, the vital activities that constitute the physiological functions (*Prana*) continue, and therefore, *Prana* is the Reality. Where the *Prana* has ceased, the sense-organs also cease to function. This is called the *Prana-atma-vada*.

(4) Others came to contradict this theory and establish their own view points. They argued that *Prana* is inert (*jada*), and therefore, the real experiencer, the vital factor in us is the mind; and

so, "mind is the Truth", they declared. This school can be to some extent compared with the modern psychologists. this Mind-Reality theory (*Mano-bhokta-Atma-vada*) also could not remain without opposition for long.

(5) One of the disciples of Buddha, Bhikku Yogachara, founded a school and had a great number of followers. These *Yogacharas* consider that there is a knower of the mind who knows it to be "my mind". Thoughts in the mind never remain the same, and for every thought, there is a knower. This moment-to-moment knowing is the Reality declared this school of Buddhism, and this is called as "*the Kshanika-Vignana Vada*". They conclude that the flickering knower is the Ultimate Reality.

(6) Even this was contradicted by yet another school in Buddhism. They noted that in deep-sleep, the intellect is also not functioning, and therefore, the experience of nothingness (*sunya*) of the sleep is the Ultimate Reality. This theory is called as *Sunyavada*.

The champions of all these six schools quoted liberally the Upanishads, argued elaborately and quite illogically came to these wrong conclusions. Each of them believes that their conclusions are the ultimate truth, even though these conclusions are against the final assertions of the Scriptures, the true principles of logic, the true convic-

tions of reason and the immediate urgency of experiences.

Why is it that such subtle thinkers, at once great scholars of the Scriptures, have themselves come to such wrong conclusions regarding the Ultimate Reality behind life? The answer is suggested in the spirit of the concluding line of this Hymn, which is repeated chorus-like in all the verses. It shows that without *devotion* to the teacher, who is none other than Lord Parameswara Himself, a clear understanding of the deeper and the subtler imports of the Upanishads will not be clearly unveiled to the students. Without being taught by a real Guru the realization of the Self is not easily possible; many have tried independently to study the Scriptures, but they had come finally to read into the Upanishads different meanings, and have arrived at conclusions, which are against the very subtle and divine import of our Scriptures.

These independent students are forced to bring forth their own intellectual theories to build up and to support their wrong conclusions. They, later on, came to declare unequivocally their own conclusions to the world at large. The average man usually incapable of independent thinking naturally followed the scholars of the age, and thus these philosophers had large following in their own times.

These conclusions were arrived at, no doubt, by great intellects. But in their inner unpreparedness, they reached but wrong conclusions in their own thought processes. These different conclusions, arrived at by them, in different eras of history, are indicated above.

In short, the champions of all the six schools used the Upanishads as the basis for their arguments and each believed that the conclusions they arrived at were the ultimate Truth, even though their associations were against the true principles of logic, the true convictions of reason and the immediate force of experience. Why was there such a divergence in their opinions regarding the Ultimate Reality behind life? The answer is suggested in the concluding line of the Hymn, which is repeated chorus-like in all the verses. It emphatically states that without devotion to the Teacher, who is none other than the Lord Paramshwara Himself, a clear understanding of the subtler imports of the Upanishads will not be unveiled to the students. The Realization of the Self will not be possible without the guidance of a true Guru. And an independent attempt to study the Scriptures will only lead the aspirant into further confusions; ultimately he may finally come to read in the Upanishads a meaning which is against the very essential Truth they have proclaimed.

देहं प्राणमपीन्द्रियाण्यपि चलां बुद्धिं च शून्यं विदुः
 स्त्री बालान्धजडोपमास्त्वहमिति भ्रान्ता भृशं वादिनः ।
 मायाशक्तिविलासकल्पितमहान्यामोहसंहारिणे
 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ५ ॥

देहं - Body; प्राणं - Prana; अपि - also; इन्द्रियाणि
 sense organs; अपि - also; चलां - ever changing; बुद्धि -
 intellect; च - and; शून्यं - void (Non-existence); विदुः
 consider; स्त्रीबालान्धजडोपमा - intellectually innocent as
 woman-child-blind-idiot - तु - indeed; अहं - I; इति - thus;
 भ्रान्ता - deluded; भृशं - firmly; वादिनः - arguing; मायाशक्ति-
 विलासकल्पितमहान्यामोहसंहारिणे - He who removes all the
 terrible misconceptions created by the deluding
 play of maya; तस्मै - to Him; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - the Divine
 Teacher; नमः - Prostration; इदं - this; श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये -
 Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

*He who removes all the terrible misconcep-
 tions created by the deluding play of Maya—
 in those who, intellectually innocent as
 woman-child-blind-idiot and consider the
 Reality as their body, or their Prana, or their
 senses, or their ever-changing intellect or as
 mere void, and through error (mis-concep-
 tion) declare them to be the only Reality—
 to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshina-
 moorthy, is this Prostration.*

The previous stanza removed the difficulty in understanding the Vedantic declarations "Atman alone is the Reality". This stanza is employed in order to meet the challenges of other schools of thought and their hypotheses on what is the ultimate Reality. It gives also an inkling of the correct method of contemplation that will help the seeker to arrive at the Reality behind the world of change.

The uncompromising atheists, Charvakas, consider "direct perception" (*pratyaksha*) alone as the only "source of knowledge" (*pramana*). They recognise only four-elements (*tattwas*) because according to them "space" (*akasa*) does not exist, since it cannot be directly perceived.

They know no liberation other than death,* nor do they recognise dharma among their "duties of life" (*purushartha*). Wealth (*artha*) and desire (*kama*) are the only two "duties in life" that they recognise; have wealth to enjoy life: this is the only goal. According to them there is, of course, no God: "There is never a God, who is the accomplisher (*karta*) of creation; it is therefore futile and foolish to think of the other world (*Paraloka*).**

* Maranad anyo naasthi moksho nama purusharthah.

मरणादन्यो नास्ति मोक्षो नाम पुरुषार्थः

** Na kaschit Iswarah Kartha, Paraloka Katha Vrittha.

न कश्चिद् ईश्वरःकर्ता, दरलोक कथा वृथा

They declare "we do not need any such Guiding Principle as a Mover or a Nourisher. Why do we need a Mover for an arrow that has already left the bow? We need no special agency to supervise the growth of a plant that has already germinated, and if there be really such a Mover or Nourisher, it would have been available for us to recognise. Since we do not see it, there is no such Power, no God. Why unnecessarily fancy the existence of Iswara?"

Thus accepting only "direct perception" as the only "source of knowledge", Charvakas have comfortably arrived at their final conclusion: "the body is the ultimate Reality." Existence, birth, growth, decay, disease and death are all changes of the body, and they are natural to it. Therefore, we need no other Self (*Atman*) to be supposed as functioning through the body. Body alone is the Reality. The distinctions of vocation and status (*varnashrama*) are all for the body. The various ritualistic purifications (*jathakarmaadi samskara*) are all for the body alone. Blessing from the elders and wisemen "may you live for a full 100 years", is not for the *Atman*; it is only for body. This, in a sense, is the main conclusion and argument of the materialists, the Charvakas.

All the six schools of thought that we have noted earlier* fall into different types of atheism,

* Please refer Introduction to Stanza V.

although they are seekers of the Reality that governs the world of experiences. The answer to them is the convincing contents of this stanza.

The various scholars who had come to different conclusions with their own original intellectual theories regarding the Reality are already enumerated in the introductory portion. They are indicated here in the first line of the stanza. The 'conjunction' (*cha-kara*) in the first line may be taken to indicate other schools and their theories which have not been discussed here, such as *Naiayikas*, *Vaiseshikas*, *Sankhyans* and others, with their *Pradhan*, *Mahat*, 24 — *Tattwas* etc. These philosophers are "mere disputants (*brhisamvadinah*); they are indeed "madmen" (*bhranthah*). This term "mad-men" does not mean men of deranged mind, but only "people who understand the essence as something different from what it is."*

Here the example given by Sankara — (*Sthri balandha jadopamah*) — is to show that Charvakas and others are deluded like hysterical-women, children, blindmen or idiots, who, in brief, lack true discrimination to grasp the Truth rightly and, therefore, conclude It to be different from What It is.

* Tatwam anyatha pratipathyamanah = They who do not recognise things which are there, but do imagine things which are there, but do imagine things which are not there.

How is it that such great men like Charvakas and others, men who had great scholarship and learning, men with acute intelligence and extreme reasoning powers, men with vision and intellectual flights, men with observation and study and men with great concentration and terrible *tapas*, have arrived at such divergent conclusions, and each one is as far removed from the final conclusions of the Upanishads as they are from each other? This becomes a mysterious and fascinating riddle.

All of them were students of the Upanishads; nay, all of them based all their arguments, except, perhaps, the Charvakas upon the contents and declarations in the Upanishads. And it becomes an endless intriguing riddle how they failed so completely to feel the true throb of the Sruthi and enter into the warmth of our eternal culture.

Sri Sureswaracharya in his *Vartikam* explains that it is due to lack of God's grace, which is nothing other than the grace of the Teacher (*Guru-kripa*). Here Parameswara, the Lord, is himself the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy, and prostrating unto Him is the sure means of earning that inner grace without which the unconquerable sorceries of Mava, the consort of the Lord, cannot be escaped. The total surrender of one's ego, in utter devotion and reverence to the Lord (Teacher) is the method of identifying ourselves with the Teacher (the Lord).

Through such an honest and deep identification our intellect 'grows out of its own *vasana-thraldom*, and to the extent one's inner equipments (*anthah karana*) can be cleansed of its vasana-encrustations, to that extent they become purer, and therefore, subtler. Without thus raising the sensitivity of the intellect, the Subtler than the Subtlest (*Sukshmaat sukshamataram*) Truth cannot be apprehended spiritually nor even comprehended intellectually.

A contemplative intellect alone has the necessary strength to reach the heart of the Scriptures. A healthy intellect, however single-pointedly efficient it may be, though it may outshine others in the objective fields of observation, analysis and judgment, when it comes to the subjective realm of spiritual quest, it fails. A subtle intellect, supported efficiently by a pure heart alone can expect success therein and hope to achieve the experience of the Eternal.

The methods of raising the contemplativeness in a diligent intellect are by the techniques of devotion and surrender. The consequent subtlety, and efficiency raised in the field of human mind and intellect through devotion unto the Lord or the Teacher, is termed in Vedanta as the "blessings of Parameswara" or as the "grace of the Teacher".

Without this blessing to cross over the enchantments of "Maya" is not easy.*

He who thus saves us from the confusions arising in ourselves regarding the Reality, due to the delusory powers of Maya within.....to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy is this prostration.

The same idea we find endorsed in Sreemad Bhagavatam: "those who have a deep and true devotion for the Lord of the Universe, they will gain His grace. Then the Maya of the Lord, which is so unfordable for all others, will become easy for them to cross over. Thereafter they will never again have the concepts of "I am the body — in their fleshy body, which is to be ultimately the dinner for dogs and foxes. (Na yesham Mamaahamiti dhe swasrugaala bhakshye)"**

This 'I am the body' idea (dehaatma-bhava) can be cured only through devotion, and when an intellect sharpened with devotion is brought to play upon the statements of the Great Scriptures, then alone the subtler Truths therein become revealed to that student; hence the necessity of adoring the Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

* Daivee hyesha Guna mayee mama maya duratyaya
Mameva ye prapadyante mayametam taranthi te

— Geeta VII-24

देवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

❀ न येषां ममाहमिति धीः श्वसृगाल भक्ष्ये ।

राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दु सदृशो मायासमाच्छादनात्
 सन्मात्रः करणोपसंहरणतो योऽभूत्सुषुप्तः पुमान् ।
 प्रागस्वाप्समिति प्रबोधसमये यः प्रत्यभिज्ञायते
 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ६ ॥

*Rahugrasta divakarendu sadrso maya samacha
 danat
 Sanmatrah karanopa samharanato yobhotsu-
 huptaa puman
 Pragasvapamil prabodha samaye yah praty-
 bhignayate
 Tasmhi Sri gurumortaye namah idam Sri dak-
 shinamortaye.* 6

राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दुसदृशः - like the Sun or Moon during eclipse; मायासमाच्छादनात् - enveloped in Maya; सन्मात्र - becomes existence alone; करणोपसंहरणतः - on folding up all the function of the senses; यः - He who; अभूत् - enters; सुषुप्तः - the state of deep sleep; पुमान् - supreme; प्राक् - before; अस्वाप्स - well slept; इति - thus; प्रबोधसमये - on waking; यः - He who; प्रत्यभिज्ञायते - remember; तस्मै - to Him; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - Divine Teacher; नमः - Prostration; इदं - this; श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये - to Sri Dakshinamoorthy;

On folding up all the functions of the senses, He who enters into a state of deep-sleep and becomes there Existence alone veiled in Maya, like the Sun or the Moon during eclipse, and who, on waking, remembers to have slept, to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy, is this Prostration.

He who is the Purusha in this physical body (*yah puman*) is none other than the spiritual centre in the assembly of matter. This Self, the Parameswara, Himself when withdrawn from the sense-organs, which give the special knowledge of sense-stimuli, goes to sleep (*sushuptowbhoot*).

Vedanta is the only philosophy in the world which takes into consideration the total experiences of life, available at all the three stages of consciousness: the waking, the dream and the deep-sleep conditions. In this Sastra alone we find that the great thinkers have been observing life from all possible angles, before they come to their conclusions upon it.

“So long as we are conscious of and functioning through the sense organs, we are in the state of waking”.*

“When the consciousness is withdrawn from the body and the sense organs, when the mind comes to experience its own suppressions that is the state of dream”.†

“When our awareness of everything has ended, and when even the mind and intellect have retired,

* *Indria Arthopalabdhī Jagaritam*

इन्द्रियार्थोपलब्धिः जागरितम्

† *Karaneshu upasamharateshu jagarita samskara janya visva svapnah*

करणेषु उपसंहृतेषु जागरित संस्कार जन्य विश्व स्वप्नः

and the intellect perceives nothing, this condition of rest in the casual body (*vasanas*) is called the state of deep-sleep"†.

These are three conditions of consciousness more exhaustively described and indicated in the Mandokya & Karika.

It is from this condition of sleep that the Buddhists bring us a piece of evidence to prove their *Sunnyavada*, Sleep is empty of experiences because the instruments of waking experiences, the gross and subtle bodies, are not available in deep-sleep, and therefore, do not bring for us any type of experiences. This condition of deep-sleep is caused by the veiling of Ignorance (*Maya-samacchaadanaat*).

Now the question is in this state of deep-sleep, does the Spirit get completely annihilated, or is it only the temporary destruction of all Its manifestations? By a simile this condition is explained by Sankara in this stanza. Just as the shadow of earth and moon (*Rahu*) covers the sun and the moon, and thus temporarily does not allow the sun or the moon to manifest themselves, so too the Consciousness is not available to illuminate and recognise anything at the time of deep-sleep.

† Sarvaparakara gnanopasamhara buddhe kaarana-avasthanah sushuptih
सर्वप्रकार ज्ञानोपसंहार कारणावस्थान सुषुप्तिः ।

During the time of full eclipse the sun gets covered completely. Even at such a moment, the world is not plunged into utter darkness. For, behind the shadow of the earth (*Rahu*), the Sun still exists. From our stand point we may say "*Rahu* has swallowed the sun", but in fact, *Rahu* is far away from the sun, and even when *Rahu* is covering the sun, it is experienced only by a limited number of observers living within a limited area. For the other parts of the world there is no eclipse at all.

In deep-sleep, it is true, there are no perceptions. To conclude thereby that in the condition of deep-sleep the Atman, the Self, is Itself annihilated merely shows a lack of philosophical subtlety of thinking on the observation of the phenomena. The *Sunyavadins* among the Buddhists argue that in deep-sleep there is nothing, and therefore, nihilism *Sunya* is the ultimate Reality in the world. This is answered by the third line in the stanza.

Deep-sleep is a condition when all senses cease to function, because the intellect in man at that time gets drowned in inertia (*tamas*). This temporary period of rest in which all organs of perception, feeling and thought have retired from their functions is called *deep-sleep*. Naturally, therefore in deep-sleep there are no perceptions of the body or emotions of the mind, or thoughts of the intellect. In the absence of these "objects", Con-

sciousness has nothing to illumine except the "state of nothingness".

We can be conscious not only of things that *exist*, but it is possible for us to be conscious of the "absence of a thing". It is the experience of everyone of us that we notice the *absence* of an individual in a party. Thus deep-sleep is a condition when Consciousness is not illumining the presence of any "objects", but it is a condition of consciousness where the total absence of the objects of experience is felt, a state of consciousness without content. Since we experience in deep-sleep this "nothingness", on waking up from the deep-sleep we crystalize our experience of sleep and truly express "*I experienced nothing*". This term 'nothing' only means a condition of *no-thing*; meaning, there was no perceivable *thing* for my consciousness to illumine.

But at the same time, on waking up, everyone of us can "remember"* (*Pratyabhigyna*) that we had a very peaceful objectless sleep. If we consider the working of memory, the Vedantins contend, we shall understand this phenomenon more

* This memory recognition (*Pratyabhigyna*) is beautifully described by the Sureswaracharya in his *Varthikam* :

Bhaatasya Kasya-Chit Poorvrm Bhaasamanasya Sampradam

Soyam-Itya-Anusandhaanam Pratyabhi-Gyana-Muchyate

Something that we had seen or experienced in the past, under a set of circumstances, when the same thing is seen or experienced later on, under a different set of circumstances, memory comes back to us in a sudden flash of recognition; this is *Sratyabhigyna*.

exhaustively. It is a fact that I cannot remember your experiences, nor can you remember my experiences. But I can remember my experiences as vividly as you can remember your experiences.

Therefore it is a logical, and a scientific truth that in remembering the remember-*er* and the experiencer must be one and the same. What I experienced in Utterkasi, you can never remember. Thus, if on waking up in the morning, I, the waker, can remember that I had a good sleep, something in me must have been, all the time in the deep-sleep, aware of or knowing the "objectlessness" of my experience at that time. This remembering (*Pratyabhigyna*) is one of the most intimate experiences of every one of us through which the Vedantins try to indicate to the contemplative student that the Consciousness was present even in the condition of deep-sleep.

The Nihilists (*Sunyavadins*) even while asserting that Sunya is Truth, they are admitting the presence of a Consciousness with which they had gathered the knowledge of the "total non-existence of all things". This school of Buddhists when they assert, "the Sunya exists", they are contradicting themselves inasmuch as they say "non-existence exists". At the time of deep-sleep when all receptions and responses are at rest, non-existence of things is the only experience of the intellect. This condition is positively known by an *awareness* which is the Atman, the Pure Consciousness.

In deep-sleep, the instruments of comprehension—of objects and feelings—are not available, and hence Consciousness *of them* is not possible. But since we are then able to experience this 'state of total absence of all comprehensions' we know that, even in deep-sleep, the Self-effulgent Source of all Knowledge, the Atman, is present.* Therefore, there is no Sunyatwa Kshanikattwa or Jadattwa in the Self.

If non-existence (*Sunya*) was the Reality from which all things have risen up, we should have the experience that "the pot *exists not*," "the chair *exists not*", "the book *exists not*", for, the cause of a thing must be ever present in all its effects: all the ornaments made out of gold are golden, and all things that are made of wood are wooden. Our experience in the world is that "the pot *exists*", "the chair *exists*", "the book *exists*". This Existence alone is the essential cause from which the stone, plant, animal and man, including the entire cosmos, has risen up, because, we have a positive knowledge of their existence at all times.

The theory of the Buddhists that before creation there was only "Pure Non-existence" is a fallacious one, as out of nothingness "something" can never emerge. Since we are experiencing the "existence of things" everywhere and at all times,

* Swaprakasatmatatwa.

स्वप्रकाशात्मतत्त्व

Existence must have been before all creation. And from Existence alone the created things and beings must have arisen. This Existence is common to all, at all times, and is continuous in its play in and through the world's things and beings.

In case the world has arisen from Non-existence (*Sunya*) say, something like man's horns* it will be a contradiction in terms†; and an impossibility.

Not only that 'objects will have no existence, but the very 'subject', the experience in me should also have no existence. If *Soonyavada* is accepted, I will also have to accept that I do not exist, which is too difficult a proposition to believe without severe protest!

Their arguments that atoms joined together is the assembly of matter that the nature or *Swabhava* of matter is to express life will not stand a moment's closer scrutiny and analysis. Atoms are inert and insentient. They cannot of their own accord come together to form this mighty Power called Life, or this universe with every living organism, each a delicate and complicated machinery in itself, unless there be a Supreme Intelligence behind this creation.

* *Manushya srunga*

मनुष्य शृंग

† *Vyavahara viruddha*

व्यवहार विरुद्ध

The various parts that go to make a machine cannot assemble together and function as a machine without an intelligent technician behind it. Stones and mortar, wood and iron cannot assemble themselves of their own accord into a house without an agent to build them into the required pattern.

Therefore it is obvious that this theory of the Buddhists† is supremely untenable. The theories of the *Kshanika-vignanavadins*, among the Buddhists, are also equally untenable.

If from moment to moment experiences are ever changing in the intellect, and each moment has its own independent experience, what exactly is their explanation for our total all comprehensive experience of life? According to them, today I should not have the memories of my experiences of yesterday, or even of the moment that has just passed by, because the intellect that knew the last experience is dead, and another wave has already started. In case I have still got the memories of all my past experiences in life, then there must be a Principle, constant and unchanging which observes and registers all these different experiences of the intellect. This integrating Substratum, this constant Witness of all these changes is called the Atman.

† Nir-atmaka skanda vada

If we accept this Buddhistic concept, then all memories of our past experiences, which in its totality we call as our wisdom or knowledge, would be impossible, for man would have only a moment by moment experience, each independent and unrelated to the last. If there is no rememberer, who would have felt hunger? And, having felt hungry, how would he have remembered that by taking food the pang of hunger could be satisfied?

Instead we find that even a child recognises a fruit as something that was like the one he enjoyed yesterday, and, therefore, he asks for it again. And a child who once gets burnt slightly by fire, thereafter never comes anywhere near it for fear of being burnt. A new-born baby of its own accord, without any training or education, instinctively suckles the bosom of its mother, this can be only because of its memory of such experiences in its past.

In Short it is by this Light, this Illuminating Principle alone that the drama of life is being enacted. This Truth that is both Existence (*Satta*) and Consciousness (*Spurana*) that is ever present in all things*, at all times.

* Refer Pachadassi—X Chapter—The "theatre lamp illumines" at one and the same time—the orchestra, the dancing girl, the Prabhu and the audience. The light was shining in the hall before the crowd assembled and dance-recital started, when the programme was over and the assembly had dispersed, the lamp would continue to illumine the empty hall. Without the light, the function would have been a failure, by the presence of this light alone, the function was a success. Similarly, there must be the one Infinite Conscious Principle, ever illumining the presence, or the absence of things. Without it no vital manifestation of life will ever be possible.

As a fitting conclusion to this chain of arguments, Sri Sureswaracharya rightly says, with self-confident assertion in his *Manasollasam* :

“Partless, changeless, without any delusory super-impositions without any impurities, the Sole All-full, Purusha is called Parameshwara”.†

One may wonder why these Buddhists, thinkers of such subtle intellects were unable to detect with the other schools of wrong conclusions this Permanent Principle behind life. Why they with the other schools of wrong conclusions misinterpreted the Upanishadic texts. An intellectual approach, however subtle it may be is not enough, there is a limit beyond which it cannot probe, conditioned as it is by Maya. Only when the mind has been cleansed of all its vasanas, has been thus freed of all its finite bonds, only then will it be ready for that transcendental Experience—when the identity of the individual is merged with the Eternal Substratum, and having experienced which he can say, in the stirring and beautiful words of Shri Sureswaracharya in his Vartikam:

“From where words retire in their in capacity to express, where the mind gets itself dissolved, there all objects and the welter of experiences

† Niramso Nirvikaarascha Niraabhaaso Niranjanah
Purusha Kevala Pournah Prochyate Parameswarah

merge into one, and all elements end their separate existence, as the rivers merge into the one ocean. Where is delusion, where is sorrow, to one who has come to constantly experience this Divine State?"*

Introduction to Stanza VII

If flowers are to be strung together into one garland of beauty, there must be a thread to hold them together. If pearls are to be made into a necklace, there must be the same golden chord running through each one of them. Similarly, if the different whirls of matter are synchronised so perfectly, and are brought together to function as a whole, there must be a chord of Reality that threads the different equipments of this composite structure together. By a process of analytical enquiry this golden vein of Reality—which is Changeless, and Firm, which presides over all functions of matter, and lends Its own Consciousness to the beings — is distinctly indicated in this verse.

One of the methods of indicating this Truth as distinctly separate from the different layers of matter that constitute the personality of man, is by an analysis of the different stages through which human life flows. Childhood, youth, mid-

* Vacho yatra Nivartnste, Mano yatra Villeyate,
Ekee bhavanti Tatraiva, Bhutaani Bhuvanaanicha
Samasthaani cha Tatwaani Samudre Sindhavo yathaa
Kah-sokas-tatra ko moha Ekatwam-anupasyatah

dle age and *old* age are the distinct *Stages* of life. The waking, the dream and the deep-sleep are the distinct *stages* of Consciousness through which everyone lives. Similarly, there are the various *conditions* of life such as joy and sorrow, heat and cold, success and failure, etc. In and through them all, the Vedantic teachers point out an integral Truth that holds them together. The same process is followed here in the stanza under discussion.

In the previous verse the capacity to “Remember” in our intellect — the capacity to reassemble the past experiences in our memory — has been indicated as a source of knowledge (*Pramana*) in establishing the presence of a Changeless Knower, knowing all experiences, irrespective of time and other variable conditions. Direct perception (*Pratyaksha*), inference (*anumana*) declarations of the wise (*Sastra*) etc., are generally considered, and very often accepted by all philosophers, as dependable sources of knowledge. The opponents argue that ‘remembrance’ (*Pratyabhigyna*) cannot be classified under either direct perception* or under inference (*ANUMANA*). Nor is this ‘re-membrance’ considered as an independent category among its main sources of knowledge.

“Therefore, the faculty of ‘re-membrance’ (*Pratyabhigyna*) employed in the previous stanza

* Indriyārtha Sannikarsha gnanam pratyaksham.

इन्द्रियार्थं सन्निकर्षज्ञानं प्रत्यक्षम् ।

in proving the presence of the Changeless Spirit, in the changing welter of experiences, is not acceptable", is the contention of the opponents. This objection is also answered. Since everyone has got the experience of this, it falls under category of direct perception (*Pratyaksha*).

The verse gives us a direct method of comprehending the Truth within ourselves through a close analysis of our own subjective experiences in life. Ordinarily life is so crowded, with all our physical, mental and intellectual experiences, that we are not generally conscious of the play of the Infinite in us. Here Acharya Sankara indicates the method of distilling that Essence of Reality out of the welter of our 'objects' of experiences.

Once this discriminative capacity is developed, the experience that the Atman within is the Brahman everywhere present can be easily had. According to Advaita Philosophy this is the goal.†

बाल्यादिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु तथा सर्वास्वस्थास्वपि
व्यावृत्तास्वनुवर्तमानमहमित्यन्तः स्फुरन्तं सदा ।
स्वात्मानं प्रकटीकरोति भजतां यो मुद्रया भद्रया
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ७ ॥

† Pratyagatma Brahmaikya gnanameva Kaivalyam.

प्रत्यगात्म ब्रह्मैक्यज्ञानमेव कैवल्यम् ।

*Balyadishvapi jagradadishu tatha sarvasva vastha svapi
Vyavritasvanu varthamana mahmityan tah spurantam sada
Svatmanam pratikaroti bhajatam yo mudraya bhadraya
Tasmai Sri gurumortaye namah idam Sri dakshinamortaye.*

बाल्यादिषु - In all stages like boyhood etc; अपि - also; जाग्रदादिषु - in all states like waking etc, तथा-
similary; सर्वास्तु - in all; अवस्थास्तु - conditions; अपि - also;
व्यावृत्तास्तु - constantly manifests; अनुवर्तमानं - persists;
अहं - "I"; इति - thus; अन्त - within; स्फुरन्तं - illumining;
सदा - ever; स्वात्मानं - His own Self; प्रकटीकरोति - reveals;
भजतां - to His devotees; यः - He who; मुद्रया - sign of
knowledge; भद्रया - by the auspicious; तस्मै - to him
श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - the Divine Teacher, नमः - Prostration; इदं -
this; श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये - to Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

He, who, through the Sign of Know-
ledge (Gnanamudra) reveals to his devotees
His own Self—which persists in all stages of
age (childhood, boyhood, youth and old age),
in all states (waking, dreaming and deep-
sleep) and in all other conditions — and who
constantly manifests Himself inwardly as "I"
.....to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri
Dakshinamoorthy is this Prostration.

In all *stages* of life, meaning in all stages of
growth, decay, disease and death, and in all stages
of childhood, youth and old age; in *states* of Con-
sciousness wherein man gathers his experiences
of life, viz., the waking-state, the dream-state and
deep-sleep state; and, similarly in all other *condi-
tions* such as "I am the doer" (*Karaham*) — "I
am the enjoyer" (*Bhoktaham*) — in short, in all

experiences of all intelligent people, at all periods of time, around the globe everywhere there is that one continuous and constant denominator without which no objective experience is ever possible.

This constant factor, the "subject", expresses itself in every bosom as "I", the "experiencer". This one subjective unity that holds all experiences together is sharply pointed out in the first two lines of the stanza. In and through them all, however variable the experiences may be, "I" am present and all of them are "my" experiences. This is common to all, at all times—whether they are remembering their past experiences, or comparing them with the present life, or referring themselves to their future expectations. The "I" is the subjective factor that is common in all of them.

This "I" alone is the essential Self indicated by the term "Thou" in the Mahavakya "That Thou Art"*. This Self is pointed out to be not merely an all-pervading transcendental Reality, but it is immanent, and It can be apprehended within the body.†

Within the bosom of every living creature, there is constantly the manifestation of the Self as

* Twam pada lakshyarthā Atma.

त्वंपतलक्ष्यार्थ आत्मा

† Antah spurantah — Anta sareramadhye Ahamiti Sado basamanam.

“I” the doer, or “I”, the enjoyer. This Self is the same in every object, and, hence, is called as Pratyagaatma.†

This Parameswara, the Supreme Lord, has taken the form of the Guru Sri Dakshinamoorthy, and to Him this prostration. This Supreme Principle. “Eternal, knowledge, Infinite, the Brahman”;** is the theme of all the Upanishads, and It is described therein as the One Essential Reality, remaining perfectly unconditioned at all times. This Pure Self has become the very Self or the Guru.

It is such a Teacher, who has become one with the Infinite, and has established his oneness with the Infinite Substratum of the Universe who instructs an integrated and well-disciplined student in the Highest Truth through the sign of Knowledge, called *Gnanamudra*.

This auspicioust† Sign demonstrates beautifully to the disciple the oneness of the inner Self and the Self everywhere.

Gnanamudra is generally indicated by holding the little, ring and middle fingers erect, straight and together, and the index finger bent to touch

‡ Prati Prati Sarereyha Atma.

** Satyam Gnanam Anantam Brahma — Taitireya Upanishad II-1.

† Vignanam anandam Brahma — Brahadaranyaka Upanishad V-9-28.

the middle of the thumb, so that a circle is formed between the index finger, palm and the lower-half of the thumb. This sign shown with the palm they called as the Sign of Knowledge.

This is indeed significant. The three fingers can be indicated to mean the gross, the subtle and the casual bodies, and when they are completely disciplined and made single pointed, the Self indicated by the index finger, that presides over the body of the seeker, gets itself detached and comes forward to meet the thumb, that represents the Self everywhere present.* This experience that the "Self within" is the "Self everywhere" is the Infinite experience, and the Infinitude is represented here by the circle formed between the index finger and the thumb—a circle which can have no beginning and no end.

To students of learning and practice, this symbol shown by the Teacher is a sufficient indication to lift them into realms of highest contemplation, because, the symbol becomes a demonstration of the Highest, both in its theory and in its technique. To that great Teacher, who thus demonstrates to us the Oneness of the inner-Self and the Self everywhere is this, our prostration.

When we say that *this* young man was *that* boy whom you saw 10 years ago with his father in

* Inasmuch as the thumb adds to the efficiency of all the fingers.

his village, we mean that eliminating the distinctions in time, place and matter, the essential personality of the child and this young man is one and the same, and, hence, *that* boy is *this* young man. Similarly, indifferent *conditions* of expression, in the different *states* of consciousness, in the different environmental patterns there is one essential "I" pervading them all, which is repeatedly recognised and experienced at all the different *stages* of life as a Changeless unitive subject. This is called the Atman, and the method employed here has got an irresistible charm, which we meet with everywhere in Vedantic philosophy. Sankara has rightly captured the brilliant tempo and the flaming beauty of Vedanta in this single stanza.

This Unitive Subject seems to be connecting the present birth with even the previous births, or else the capacity of a child and its instinctive ability to suck the bosom of the mother is inexplicable.* Even though the experiences are not repeated as such either in terms of the objects or in terms of the circumstances, and yet, all our past experiences have left their impressions in us. These spring forth to the level of our conscious mind when similar stimuli strike the objective mind. Even when the objects of the past are not present at this moment, still the impressions

*It is observed: By itself the new born baby starts sucking at the bosom of the mother — Manasollaasa.

recorded in our memory spring forth and we remember our own similar experiences in the past. In all these cases the Knowing Principle, the Atman, is one and the same.

This thick "veil of impressions", in their totality called as *Avidya*, is the Casual Body, through which life functions.

The Consciousness functions through this layer of *vasanas*. This apparently conditioned Consciousness, becomes the "Knowing veiled in ignorance".† In its identification with the objects, body, mind and intellect, It creates in Itself the hallucination of a separate ego-centric existence. This *Avidya* which creates the agitations in the mind can be counteracted by *Vidya* that guides the mind. Both *Vidya* and *Avidya* are, according to the Vedantin, but the expressions of Maya, the mighty power of the Lord.

By the action of *Vidya* when *Avidya* is removed, the Pure Self rises within us of Its own accord. "The Soul appears to be finite because of ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed the Self which does not admit any multiplicity, truly reveals Itself by Itself; like the sun emerging out

† Gita V-15

नादत्ते कस्याचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।

अज्ञानेनाबुतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥

in its full glory or effulgence when the clouds roll away".*

This Pure Self is self-evident and self-effulgent. Maya manifested, is mind. Today we exist in the mind and function through the mind. When the mind is transcended, the enchantment of Maya has ended. In this transcendental state, the Pure Self is experienced, who is none other than the Supreme, "the Knower, I am, in all fields".†

"The world of plurality rests in me, but I am not in them".‡ "Nor do beings exist (in Reality) in Me — behold my divine yoga! Supporting all beings but not dwelling in them is Me my Self, the efficient cause of all beings.** Mandukhya Upanishad thunder that this great Lord dwells in the innermost recesses of all living creatures.

* Parichina Iva Agnanat Tannase Sati Kevalah

Swayam Prakasate Hi Atma Meghapaye Amsumaniva - Atmabodh-4

परिच्छिन्न इवाज्ञानात् तन्नाशे सति केवलः ।

स्वयं प्रकाशते ह्यात्मा मेघापायैऽशुमानिव ॥

† Kshetragyam chapi Mam viddhi Sarva kshetreshu Bharata — Geeta XIII-3.

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वं क्षेत्रेषु भारत ।

‡ Matsthani sarva bhutani na chaham teshu-avasthitah—Geeta IX-4.

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः

** Na cha matsthani bhutau pasya me yogamaiswaram Bhuta brinna cha bhtastah Mamatma bhutabhavanah — Geeta IX-5.

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्

भूतसृज च भूतस्यो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥

Introduction to Stanza VIII

The concept of the Absolute is ever a strain for the intellect, because at one stage or the other logic must cease, questions must get hushed and the student is invited into the very Temple of Experience. To the unprepared and, therefore, to the not fully contemplative mind, at this stage there is extreme confusion and hesitation to accept the idea. A *Sastra-book* must sympathetically appreciate the difficulty of the imperfect student, and guide his doubt in mind and lead his hesitating steps towards the higher peaks of clearer understanding.

In the previous stanza it was said that the world of plurality (*Jagat*), the individual entity (*Jeeva*) and the very creator of the world and the individual (*Iswara*) are all in essence nothing but the Brahman, and that there is nothing other than the Brahman.¹

In that case, "how can a teacher advise the student upon this Eternal Truth. Where is the teacher? Where is the taught? In the Infinite there neither is any one born nor can there be anyone in bondage. Then, who is to be liberated by whom and from what?"

All transactions in the world of plurality happen only in the realm of ignorance when the individual is under the hallucination of the Maya-power. These activities are only up to the state

1. Brahmano anyan-na kincana

of liberation.² With this idea in mind the stanza under discussion is given out by Acharya Sankara.

“Of course from the stand point of the Absolute there is nothing other than the one Supreme Consciousness in all the three periods of time. Then not even the creator could have ever been born let alone the beginning of the manifestation of the created. This will mean that the study of the scriptures at the feet of the Guru till the seeker realises the Highest is meaningless and futile. In case all these are because of the veiling power of Maya, what exactly is her nature and her strategy?”In order to remove such doubts, which are all but natural from the mind of the intelligent student, the very ideas that Sankara had already expressed in the preceding seven stanzas are again summarised here in this verse.

Repetition is no doubt a sin against the Scriptural style. A Scripture must always be precise and definite; science and law are not fields for blabberers—such a sin cannot be levelled against Sri Dakshinamoorthy Stotra of Sankara. This is “book of advice” (*Upadesa Grantha*) where the Teacher’s anxiety is that the student should fully grasp the theme, and since the theme is so subtle, this repetition is not redundant; nor is it a sin. In fact it is a positive blessing for us.

2. The commentator says:— “Anadhyanirvachaney-Paramatma-adhyasya- Mayavasadeva sarvopi vyavaharo, brahmasaksecatkara paryantam gnatata iti abhipretya aaha—Viswam pasyati iti”.

विश्वं पश्यति कार्यकारणतया स्वस्वामिसंबन्धतः
 शिष्याचार्यतया तथैव पितृपुत्राद्यात्मना भेदतः
 स्वप्ने जाग्रति वा य एष पुरुषो मायापरिभ्रामितः
 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ८ ॥

*Visvam pasyati karya karanataya sva swami sambandhatah
 Sishyacaryataya tathaiva pitru putradyatmana bhedatah
 Svapne jagrati va ya esha purusho maya pari bhramithas
 Tasmai Sri gurumortaye namah idam Sri dakshinamortaye. 8*

विश्वं - world; पश्यति - sees; कार्यकारणतया - of cause-and effect; स्वस्वामि - as possessions and possessor; संबन्धतः - relation; शिष्याचार्यतया - as taught and teacher; तथा - similarly; एव - also; पितृपुत्राद्यात्मना - as father and son, in himself; भेदतः - differentiation; स्वप्ने - In dream, जाग्रति - In waking; वा or; यः - He who; एषः - this; पुरुषः - Purusha; मायापरिभ्रामितः - whirled in Maya; तस्मै - to him; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - the Divine Teacher; नमः - Prostration; इदं - this, श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये - to Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

He, who is the Purusha, whirled in Maya, sees the world of cause-effect diversely related as possessor and possession, father and son, and as teacher and taught, both in the state of waking and of dreaming to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy is this Prostration.

He who is famous in the Upanishads as Parameswara is the All-Full Reality and, when It functions in conjunction with the matter vestures

and their activities,³ the Supreme is recognised as *Purusha*.

He who has thus manifested Himself as the effects—body, mind and intellect—and Who, having created, has entered into this assembly of the five-sheaths (*Panchakosa-s*) and through His own identification with the garments of matter, have come to suffer endless delusory misconceptions of Himself and of the world outside. This (*Yesha*) individual so created (*Jeeva*) is the One who recognises and experiences the world of plurality (*bhedatah*) and their changes. This plurality is recognised as cause (*Karanam=Janakam*) and effect (*Karyam=Janayam*) relationship—such as possessed and possessor, or as taught and teacher, or as father and son. The “possessed” (*Suam*), such as of cause-effect diversely related as possessor and possession, house, fields, wealth, etc. The “possessor” (*Swamin*), the one who keeps a relationship of ownership, or mastery, over the thing possessed. From this relationship is born the concepts of teacher and the taught, or the concepts of father and the son. He who recognises the world of plurality in these forms to that all-Full *Purusha*, *Sri Dakshinamoorthy*, is my prostration.

Even though, in fact “there is nothing other than the Brahman”, conditioned by *Maya*, the

3. *Prakriti-Vikriti*.

प्रकृति - विकृति

4. *Neha nanasthi Kinchana-Brahadaranyaka Upanishad-III-9-28.*

नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन ।

individual (*Jeeva*) recognises the world-of-multiplicity, just as we experience a world of endless objects in our dreams.

The dream continues as long as the dreamer has not awakened himself to recognise his waking-state. So too through the teacher's instructions, and through the study of the scriptures (*Guru, Sastra Upadesa*) when an individual comes to end all his confusions (*Avidya*) in the light of the right knowledge (*vidya*), that has been discovered by him, the world of perception ends and in its place the Supreme is recognised.

Herein we must realise that the Teacher, the Scripture, the teaching, the studying etc., are all only within Maya, and, therefore, they too are delusory. But just as the delusory dream-lion can bring the dreamer to wakefulness, so too, the study of Sastra with the help of a Guru can help us to come up above the status of ego-centric consciousness in the wider ambit of a more purposeful Existence, into a fuller joy, in the plane of God-consciousness.

The Great Spirit Himself becomes in the Cause-effect-relationship a world understood in terms of relative status as servant and master, as teacher and taught and as father and son, brother, sister, daughter, uncle, etc. The One who thus creates endless distinctions and experiences them all, both in *His dream* and waking, getting Him-

self veiled from Himself and consequently suffering a seeming existence in agitation, to that Subjective Reality, the Divine Teacher, is this prostration.

In the One Self-effulgent Pure Consciousness, is created a world of multiplicity, by the indescribable Power, indicated in the Vedanta Science by the terms Maya or Avidya or the Unmanifest.

Then comes the experiences of the *apparent* plurality. This play of plurality is only a superimposition upon the One Eternal Reality, just as the head of Rahu, the "crack" in the sky, the "body" of the statue, the "laughter" of the river etc. In fact the many have no existence apart from the one. All these are the play of the one Truth.⁵

The same Reality plays the part of a father to the son, and at the same time a son to the father. Therefore, plurality is a delusion projected by the mind and the only Reality is the Self-effulgent Consciousness. When this Reality is known all these distinctions as teacher-taught, master-servant, meditator-meditation, father-son etc., all become merged⁶ to be the One Infinite *Satchidananda* Factor. The very Science of Vedanta found that

5. Lokavattu Leela Kaivalyam—Brahma Sutra ; II-2-3.

Also refer Svetasvaropanisad VI-8.

6. A similar merger of the entire dream world is experienced by every waker.

the Vedas, as "books of knowledge" indeed, belong but to the realms of delusion, and yet, their theme is the Eternal Reality.⁷ Thus, the argument of our opponents, that "according to Advaita philosophy even the Veda must be a delusion", is fully answered here.

When the veil of sleep is lifted, the dreamer and his world also ends. Reinstalling the dreamer back again on the throne of his waking is the end of the dream; so too on awakening to the Real, the perceived world of plurality ends. "If Atman is Brahman, the Perfect, the Eternal, then who is to realise what? Man is already perfect. He has nothing to achieve. Therefore, Sastra is futile. All sadhanas are meaningless; teachers are redundant. Hurrah, let us live as we are living now"..... This satirical cry of the critics is answered by the Vedantin very efficiently. The confusion of plurality is perceived and lived by the mind in man. The mind gets itself entangled with its attachments and repulsions.

It is the mind that lives in bondage and suffers the consequent imperfections. Liberation or attainment of perfection is a condition experienced by the mind; liberation is only for the mind because the mind alone was in bondage.

7. Just as the idol points to the ideal, or as my wife's picture is no merely a piece of bromide paper but indicates and brings to me fresh memories of my wife, or as my reflection registers the existence of me, so too the Vedas indicate the Reality.

The Self that identifies with a mind revelling in *avidya* is the "lower self", and same Self functioning through the *Vidya*-mind is the "Higher Self". It is regarding these two factors that we have in Mundaka-Upanishad the picture of the two birds on the same tree. "Two birds bound one to the other in close friendship, perch on the self-same tree. One of them eats the fruits of the tree with relish, while the other looks on without eating".

Introduction to Stanza IX

A poem with eight stanzas is called *Ashtakam*. The chant of Sri Dakshinamoorthy (*Ashtakam*) has concluded, and yet, Sankara adds two stanzas to make it a hymn (*Stuti*), giving a few relevant facts on the technique (*Saadhana*) of Self-realisation. A philosophy without the technique of practice (religion) is a blind elephant with plenty of strength, roaming mad in a thick jungle of things and beings, problems and happenings—where the unwieldy animal can ultimately slip over from a precipice to get shattered on the rocks below.

Those who are unable to conceive the subtler ideas so far discussed are to be given some effective "spiritual first-aid" by which their extrovert intellect can slowly become relatively quiet, and may come to manifest the power of contempla-

tion, which is at this moment lying dormant in them. Contemplation alone is the vehicle that will take us to peaks of spiritual apprehension, to the realms of all mystic possibilities. The Infinite Reality, the Uncaused Cause, from which the entire world of manifestations has sprung forth cannot, however, be directly meditated upon, unless the seeker has already gained for himself the required amount of mental integration. Ordinarily the mind of the seeker lacks in the powers of concentration and is poor in its powers of contemplation. Without these two, consistent meditation upon the Supreme is not easy.

If we have not got this required qualities of the mind, there must be a method by which we can cultivate them in us, so that with the help of these faculties, so cultivated, we can enter into the domain of true meditation.

Practices prescribed with a view to invoking these powers in a seeker are called *Upasanas*. In *Upasana* the student is required to contemplate upon the manifestations of Reality, and to conceive the Truth and meditate upon It as represented in Its manifestation. In the *puranic* traditions, we have the manifestation of the Lord in the form of the *Avatars*, and thus we have Rama, Krishna, Siva, Vishnu, etc., as our "points of contemplation" and "altars of devotion". Before the *puranic* tradition was inaugurated by Vvasa, roughly about 5000 B.C., the old Vedic tradition was to make

the student contemplate upon the manifestations of the Reality in the Cosmos.

Thus mighty powers—the Sun, the Moon, the Fire, the Wind, the Ocean, etc.,—were deities upon whom the Seekers contemplated with a feeling of devotion and a spirit of surrender. In the days of the Vedic culture, all meditators could, in and through the trellis of the pluralistic phenomenal world, recognise the All Mighty and the All-Powerful Source of all Creation in their highly meditative minds.

Through the *Upasana* of the Eight-deities (*Ashta Moorthy Upasana*), students at the time of the Vedas evolved through stages* into the Highest Experience. This is for the lesser students. The higher types of students who had the required mental integration in themselves directly *heard* the Scriptures from the teachers, independently reflected upon them, and through *contemplation* achieved full spiritual unfoldment, here and now, directly.†

From what we have so far declared, to a practical-minded student, who has realised that his experience of imperfection or limitation is caused by Maya, his anxiety can only be “how to escape from Maya. How to transcend all limita-

* *Kram mukti* = liberation in stages.

† *Sadhyomukti* = instantaneons liberation.

tions." "Through devotion unto the Lord and contemplation upon Him (*Iswara Upasana*) alone can this be achieved", is indicated definitely by Sankara in this ninth stanza.

Since the effects are not distinctly different from the cause, the elements that go into the constitution of the multiple world itself can be taken to be the manifestations of the creator. Earlier we were told that the Supreme is the one Source of Existence (*Satta*) and Illumination (*Suprana*) in every experience of the objective world. The world of perceptions itself is ever bathed in the Light of Consciousness. Therefore, the manifested world is, for those who have the subtle vision, a mirror in which the Truth is steadily and constantly reflected. One who is capable of recognising this Self, within, and in the world outside, as the One illuminator of all experiences, is the one who has realised the Highest, and he who is trying to recognise It is the seeker (*Upasaka*).

A driver while driving the car looks at the mirror, in front of him, not to see his own face but to watch the road behind. Though he is gazing in a forward direction, he is trying to understand and grasp, judge and experience, what is happening behind him on the road. Similarly, a seeker, when he is meditating upon the objects of his devotion, through the process of objective-worship, is

recognizing and experiencing something subjectively deep in himself.*

The eight fundamental factors that constitute the very material essence of the world of plurality are all manifestations of the One Infinite Cause and, therefore, they serve as points of concentration (idols), for the subtle students of Vedanta to meditate upon the Ideal. These eight fundamental factors (*Ashtamoorthy*) are Earth (*Bhu*), Water (*Ambas*), Fire (*Analah*), Air (*Anilah*), Space (*Ambaram*), Sun (*Aharnatha*=Lord of day), Moon (*Himansu*), and Man (*Puman*=Jeeva).

All these are the Lord's own eight-fold forms.† The outer cosmos (*Samashti*) is intimately connected with and is almost one with the constitution, structure and composition of the individual (*Vyashti*), this is a theme very seriously accepted by the Vedantic scholars.

* Bhooteshu bhooteshu vichitya dheerah—Kenopanishad Chapter II-5.
Pratibodhaviditam matamamrutatwam hi vindate—Keno. Chap. II-4

† Parameshwarasya Moorty-ashtaka.

भूरम्मांस्यनलोऽनिलोऽवरमहर्नाथो हिमांशुः पुमा
 नित्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्त्यष्टकम् ।
 नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभोः
 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ९ ॥

*Bhoram bhamsyanalonilombara maharnatho himamsupumaa
 Nityabhati characharatmakam idam yasyaiva murttyashtakam
 Nanyat kinchana vidyate vimrsatamyasmatparasmad vibhoh
 Tasmai Sri gurumurtaye namah idam Sri dakshinamurtaye. 9*

भूः - Earth; अंभासि - Water; अनलः- Fire; अनिलः-Air
 अंबर - Space; अहर्नाथः - Sun; हिमांशुः - Moon; पुमान्
 "Jeeva"; इति - thus; आभाति - everywhere shines;
 चराचरात्मकं - movable and immovable objects; इदं -
 this; यस्य - He whose; एव - own; मूर्त्यष्टकं - eight fold
 manifestations; न - nothing; अन्यत् - different forms;
 किञ्चन विद्यते - ever exists; विमृशतां - to those who reflect
 well; यस्मात् - from which; परस्मात् - the Supreme cause;
 विभोः - the one of all manifestations; तस्मै - to Him;
 श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - Divine Teacher; नमः - Prostrations; इदं- this;
 श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये - to Sri Dakshinamoorthy.

He, whose 8-fold forms are the "Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Sun and Moon", and who manifests Himself as this universe of the movable and the immovable objects—and to those who reflect well, besides Him, the Supreme, All-pervading Lord, there exists, nothing....to Him, the Divine Teacher, Sri Dakshinamoorthy, is this Prostration,

The microcosm is nothing but a miniature of the macrocosm and the outer world; the macrocosm, is but an enlargement of the same individual microcosm. The five elements that constitute the individual body, are the very five elements the entire universe is constituted of.

The activities of the Cosmos are all the play of the Sun (Energy) and the Moon (matter) and in this play of matter and energy, the *Jeeva* identifying with the individuality (*vyashti*) becomes a limited, sorrowful creature. Identifying with the *Samashti*, the same individuality in each one of us can become the Parameswara, the creator.

When all identifications have ended, meaning when we are identifying neither with the microcosm (*vyashti*) nor with the macrocosm (*Samashti*), the individuality merges with the God-status (*Parameswarattvam*) to become the Pure Infinite Consciousness. This method of training the mind to see the harmony between the individual and the total, is called *Upasana*. The *Upasana*

of the eight deities (ashtamurtyatmaka-Sada-Sivohamitibhavana) is prescribed here by Sankara.

Those who study the scriptures carefully from a teacher and those who, through constant rational and logical reflection come to contemplate upon It, realise that there is nothing that exists apart from the All-pervading Supreme Cause (*Parasthaad*). The entire world of names and forms is experienced as a superimposition upon the Pure Self.

Introduction to Stanza X

In this, the tenth and the concluding stanza we are shown the benefits that are to be gained by meditating on this Hymn. It can be made use of by students in all stages of their spiritual evolution.

For the best few it is an instruction pointing the way that will lead them to the Highest. To those who are not yet fully prepared, it marshals in a systematic and logical manner arguments that open up an ampler field for them to reflect upon and go beyond the limitations of the body, mind, and intellect.

A beginner is one who crawls on the surface of life, and his mental capacities are scattered and indisciplined. His only incentive for spirituality is material gain and the fulfilment of his desires. For such persons even the Rishis in the Vedas have declared the fruits that may be expected from the performance of prescribed rituals (*Karma*). Gradually the mind of such a devotee gets disciplined in the voluntary performance of these rites, till it comes to recognise the Oneness of the Lord and the Teacher, through sacrifice, devotion and reverence.

Since the hymn is meant to whip up the enthusiasm of the highest type of students, and to sing a joyous song of encouragement to the mediocre, and to minister affectionately even the dullest student, it promises to each one the reward he would aim at, the Realization of the one Reality (*Sarvatmabhava*) through Vedantic-sadhana of listening (*Sravana*), reflecting (*Manana*), and Meditation (*Nididhyasana*) is for the advanced seeker, the glory to be the servant of the Lord which is the dream of a devotee and the achievement of supernatural Powers (*Siddhis*) after which the third types of people strive.

सर्वात्मत्वमिति स्फुटीकृतमिदं यस्मादमुष्मिन्स्तवे
 तेनास्य श्रवणात्तदर्थमननाद्ध्यानाच्च संकीर्तनात् ।
 सर्वात्मत्वमहाविभूतिसहितं स्यादीश्वरत्वं स्वतः
 सिद्ध्येत् तत्पुनरष्टधा परिणतं चैश्वर्यमव्याहतम् ॥ १० ॥

*Sarvatmatvamiti 'sphutikrtamidam yasmadamusmin stave
 Tenasya sravanattadarthamananad dhyanaachcha sankirtanat
 Sarvatmatvamaha vibhuti sahitam syadisvaratvam svatah
 Sidhyettatpunarastadha parinatam 'caisvaryamavyahatam 10*

सर्वात्मत्वं - Knowledge of "all-this-Atman"; इति - this; स्फुटीकृतं - has been explained; इदं - now; यस्मात् - and so; अमुष्मिन् - in this; स्तवे - Hymn; तेन - because of this reason; अस्य - of its; श्रवणात् - listening from Teacher; तदर्थमननात् - by reflecting upon its significances; ध्यानात् - by meditating; च - also; संकीर्तनात् - by reciting it; सर्वात्मत्वमहाविभूतिसहितं - endued with all the glory of the All-Self-hood, along with holy powers, स्यात् - one shall gain, ईश्वरत्वं - of God-hood; स्वतः - by itself; सिद्ध्येत् - shall gain; तत् - that, पुनः - again; अष्टधा - in eight-fold; परिणतं - manifested; च - and; ऐश्वर्यं - Divine glory; अव्याहतं - without any obstruction.

The Knowledge "all-this-Atman" (Sarvatmatvam) has been explained in this Hymn, and so, by hearing it, by reflecting and meditating upon its meaning, and by reciting it one will attain that Divine State endued with the glory of the all-Self-hood, along with the permanent eight-fold holy-powers of Godhood.

In this hymn, this (*idam*) Atman which is the theme of the Upanishads has been thoroughly described and clearly illustrated to be of the nature of the Essential Self everywhere (*Sarvatmatvam*.) Therefore, by carefully listening to a discourse upon these stanzas from some greater teacher, by a deep and continuous reflection and by a sincere meditation upon the ideas heard and understood, all students, can come to apprehend this Reality. To employ the mind in the contemplation of what had been determined through study and reflection is the beginning of meditation (*dhyana*).

To keep the mind constantly in the attitude: "I alone am in all the things and beings, the Self, Parameswara" (*Soham Sarvatma*) is the true attempt of the mind in meditation. To keep the mind thus continuously in one line of thinking, without allowing dissimilar thought-currents to come and disturb it is the very aim and goal of meditation. It is through this process of meditation, that the Seeker, in his own intimate subjec-

* *Vijatiya pratyaya tiraskraena sajatiya pratyaika vishayikaranat.*

tive experience, spiritually comes to apprehend what had been heard from the teacher and understood through his own reflection. Till he gains this apprehension, the student is only a seeker.

To listen to the teacher (*sravana*), to reflect upon the meaning of what has been heard (*tadarthamanana*) and ultimately through meditation (*dhyana*) to experience the Truth, are the three main paths, and here in the stanza, Sankara adds one more technique called '*Kirtanam*' (singing). Singing the glory of the Truth, of the goal and the means of reaching It, and of the disciplines thus nurtured, are the methods of cultivating one's own inner faith in them.

"Singing the glory of the Lord, and of the path by which this great Truth can be brought within the experience of all", (*Kirtanam*), is again the duty of one who had already realized. Thus, through meditation (*dhyana*), when the Truth is apprehended to such a perfected one also, *Kirtanam* becomes his life's duty. Sankara, by his outstanding example, illustrated this more than any one else in his own life's work Missionary work and spreading the Knowledge of the Truth among the people is the function and duty (*dharma*) of every spiritual student.

Hereafter, in the last two lines, Sankara is describing the benefits that accrue by such a diligent pursuit of seeking and striving to realize the

Highest. This realization of the "all-is-Self", that God alone is all things, is itself the greatest of all glories (*Maha-vibhuti*).

Ordinarily in the *Yogo-Sastra* supernatural powers (*vibhutis*) is described (*anima etc.*).¹ But since in this experience of the Infinite there is a complete negation of all equipments this experience (*Sarvatmatava*) is the greatest of all glories.

Not only that a man who has realized this Highest comes to experience the great glory of *Sarvatmatvam*, but he comes to experience Pure God-hood (*isvaratvam*). He not only comes to experience and live, but really becomes the Supreme, Eternal-Knowledge-Bliss.²

Does it then mean that a man of wisdom who has experienced in himself, the Omnipotent, Eternal

1. Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma.
2. The eight super-natural powers described in the Yoga Sastra are known as the eight-siddhis: they are (1) Anima: the capacity to enter into every living creature in a subtle form; (2) Mahima: the capacity to comprehend and envelop the entire gross cosmos and feel the pulsation of the whole universe; (3) Laghima: the capacity to become as light as a feather; (4) Garima: the power to make an atom weigh as though it is a great mountain; (5) Prapti: capacity to reach anywhere at a moment's notice, be it hell or heaven; (6) Prakamya: capacity to fly in space at will. This Prakamya is otherwise termed as Prakasa when the meaning would be the capacity to glow in the body, with the light by which other objects around also can be seen illuminated; (7) Isitwam: like Viswamitra, at a mere command to create a new cosmos; and (8) Vasitwam: a capacity to bring under one's own control and enchantment not only kings and ministers, but even deities in charge of the quarters (*Dik-palakas*).

Consciousness has not got in him the eight-supernatural powers (*Siddhis*) of the Yogi? No. Sankara says that a man who has realized the One Self everywhere (*Sarvatmatvam*), and who has in his experience become the Eternal-Knowledge-Bliss-Nature of the Supreme (*iswaratvam*), the individual again (*Punah*) gains the mastery of the eight-fold modifications of *Maya* called in the Upanishadic lore as the glory of Lord (*Aisvarya*). These are none other than the eight *siddhis* described earlier.³

The man of realization who had come to express and experience of the oneness of life everywhere, to him, in his self-fulfilment he has no need for using, nor will have any occasion to employ these supernatural powers in him, because he has nothing more to gain in the world of plurality. In case of a Yogi, these powers having come to him because of the mental integration achieved, and, therefore, when he exhibits these glories, he unconsciously develops a vanity.

Thus his ego crystalizes in his bosom. Naturally, the integration gained runs out, and to that extent these powers slowly exhaust themselves.

In the case of Man of Perfection (*Gyani*) who has realized the Highest, even if he expresses these "powers" it is to him but a "play" (*Lila*) and, since he does not have the ego-centric vanity any longer in him, these powers in the Man of

3. *Satyam Gnanamanantam lakshanam Paramesvaratvam.*

Perfection cannot undermine his Knowledge. Hence these glories in him are indestructible (*avyahatam*).

Although total liberation of the Spirit from its matter entanglements (Moksha), and the consequent release from all its encumbrances is the true goal to which all sincere students are guided by this Hymn, there are very many collateral results that would come to him as a result of true study of these stanzas. These are enumerated here. Sureswaracharya in order to emphasize this idea brings in a very beautiful analogy in his *Vartikam*. He says "while cooking, the winter's cold is also relieved for the cook", similarly these eight-fold glories (*aiswarya*) are never far or separate from the experience of the Self. They are inherent in the experience of the Infinite God-hood; they cannot be separated just as "my shoulders cannot be separated from myself".

The Supreme Self is the seat of all *aiswarya*. Joy and Glory. It being Blissful and Omniscient, the Upanishads cry "all other living creatures enjoy by a jot of this Bliss of the Self alone".* These *anima* and other *siddhis* are all limited flickerings of this Mighty Omnipotence. Even while flowers are being gathered, their fragrance is already being enjoyed by us, similarly, in experiencing the Self, the *siddhis* become natural.

* Etasya anandasya anyani bhūtāni matram urajivanti
— Brah. Upanishad VI-3-32

Sri Sureswaracharya, at the conclusion of his *Vartikam* upon his revered teacher's *Hymn to Sri Dakshinamoorthy*, indicates in a simple stanza the type of students who will benefit most by the study of these stanzas. He says, "he who has supreme devotion to the Lord, and the same devotion for the Guru, to him alone the meaning of these words (*Sastra*) becomes extremely clear".

Yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deve tatha gurau
Tasyaite kathitahy arthah prakasante mahatmanah

We too shall end by quoting the very words of Sri Sureswaracharya with which he concludes his *Manasollasa* the *Vartikam* upon this great Hymn.

प्रकाशात्मिक्या शक्त्या प्रकाशानां प्रभाकरः ।
प्रकाशयति यो विश्वं प्रकाशोयं प्रकाशयताम् ॥

*The Light, by Whose Illumining Power
All luminaries get illumined,
By Whose Light the whole universe is lighted up,
May this Light enlighten us all !*



